



NORTHERN LIGHTS

Fairy Tales
of the Peoples
of the North







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**Fairy Tales
of the Peoples
of the North**

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* The fairy tale is taken from *A Mountain of Gems*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.

Little Rabbit

A Mansel Fairy Tale



Once upon a time there lived a little rabbit. He was always skipping and jumping about in the sedge on the lake shore, and he once cut his lip on one of its sharp blades. So off he went to tell Fire about it.

"Fire, Fire, burn Sedge!" said he.

"What did Sedge do to you that you want to burn it?" asked Fire.

"It cut my lip."

"It's you who's to blame for being so greedy!"

Now, this did not please Little Rabbit any too well, so off he went to tell Water about it.

"Water, Water, put out Fire!" said he.

"What did Fire do to you that you want to put it out?" asked

"It won't burn Sedge."

"And what did Sedge do to you?"

"It cut my lip."

"It's you who's to blame for being so greedy!"

Now, this did not please Little Rabbit any too well, so off he went to tell Hunter about it.

"Hunter, Hunter, shoot Water!" said he.

"What did Water do to you that you want to shoot it?"

"It won't put out Fire."

"What did Fire do to you?"

"It won't burn Sedge."

"What did Sedge do to you?"

"It cut my lip."

"It's you who's to blame for being so greedy!"

Now, this did not please Little Rabbit any too well, so off he went to tell Mouse about it.

"Mouse, Mouse, gnaw through the bow-string on Hunter's bow so he won't be able to use it!" said he.

Mouse was sorry for Little Rabbit and off she went to do as he asked her. But before she could do it, Hunter saw her, and so angry was he that he seized his bow and let fly his arrow at Water. Water rose and went after Fire. Fire was frightened and ran after Sedge. Sedge took fire and burned Little Rabbit. So there was Little Rabbit with both his ears and his tail singed, and who was to blame for it but he himself!

Sparrow, Sparrow

A Mansi Fairy Tale



"Sparrow, Sparrow, what is your head like?"

"A little dipper for scooping water."

"Sparrow, Sparrow, what is your beak like?"

"A little crow bar for breaking ice."

"Sparrow, Sparrow, what is your tongue like?"

"A pretty paddle for paddling with."

"Sparrow, Sparrow, what is your back like?"

"A pretty boat for sailing in."

"Sparrow, Sparrow, what is your belly like?"

"A little bag for keeping a pipe in."

"Sparrow, Sparrow, what are your legs like?"

"The two little poles that hold up a tent."

"Sparrow, Sparrow, what are your wings like?"

"The two folds of cloth that make a tent roof."

"Sparrow, Sparrow, what is your tail like?"

"A little trough for feeding the dogs."

The Mouse and the Bird

A Chukchi Fairy Tale



Once upon a time there lived a mouse and a bird.
One day the bird went to pay some tribesmen a visit, but came
back home again soon after.

"What do the tribesmen live in?" asked the mouse.

"*Yarangas*."

"What are *yarangas*?"

"Tents."

"What is the tent roof made of?"

"The skins of deer."

"What are the rafters made of?"

"The bones of deer."

"What do the tribesmen sleep on?"

"Mats made of deer skins."

"What do they eat?"

"The tongues of deer and the eyes of deer."

"Where is their camp?"

"It was burnt down by fire."

"Where is the fire?"

• "It was put out by rain."

"Where is the rain water?"

"The birds drank it up."

"Where are the birds?"

"They flew away."

Why a Fox Has a Long Tail and the Bear and the Rabbit Short Ones

13

An Orochi Fairy Tale



One day and this was a long, long time ago, the Lord of the Forest declared that it was his intention to present every animal with a tail. The animals heard about it and set off to see him in a great hurry. The fox, the bear and the rabbit ran along together, but on the way the fox decided to play a trick on her two friends.

Said the fox:

"Why don't you go and eat some raspberries, friends? There are plenty of them growing beyond the mound there. And as for me, I'm going to try and catch us a bird for dinner. The way is long, and we need some food."

The bear and the rabbit believed what the fox, sly thing that she was, told them, and off they went to pick the raspberries. While the bear was eating the berries and the rabbit standing near and watching him, the fox lost no time. Off she ran to the house of the Lord of the Forest all by herself, and as she was there before anyone, got the biggest and bushiest of the tails. But the bear and the rabbit were the last to arrive, and by the time they did there was only one tail left. There was no help for it, and the Lord of the Forest tore the tail in two and gave one half to the bear and the other to the rabbit.

And that is why the fox has a big tail and the bear and the rabbit little ones.

The Animals' Council

A Tofalar Fairy Tale



One day Burkhan, a famed hero of the Tofalari, called all the animals together. A council was held at which it was decided to choose a tsar from among them.

The owl's was the first name to be called. But as it was proved that, big as his eyes were, he could not see by day, he was turned down. The rabbit, who was named next, was turned down too, for it was decided that he was too much of a coward to make a good tsar, and the moose declined the honour himself.

"It is I who am stalked by the wolf, not the other way round, therefore he is stronger than I," the moose said.

The bear was hesitant.

"How can I be tsar, friends!" said he. "Why, so busy was I hunting for food that I was even late for this council."

"Were you now!" said the animals. "Well, don't think you'll go unpunished. From now on you'll stay underground for six months in the year and never see the light of day in all that time."

So in the end it was the cuckoo-bird who was made tsar.

The Mouse and the Elk

A Khamti Fairy Tale



A mouse was out in a meadow one day nibbling at the grass when all of a sudden there was a rush of wind and it began to rain. Drenched, the mouse hid in the grass. Just then a huge elk with great spreading horns came out of the forest. Round and round he walked, pulling up tufts of grass and munching hungrily, and before he knew it he had swallowed the mouse together with the grass.

The mouse, finding itself in the elk's belly, said:

"I'll sharpen a knife, cut the elk's throat and be free again."

"You can free yourself without cutting my throat," said the elk. "Just step out through my mouth."

"Not I! You slobber so, elk," replied the mouse, and called out again:

"I'll sharpen a knife, cut the elk's throat and free myself!"

"Don't cut my throat, come out through my nose," the elk begged.

"Not I! Your nose is wet, elk."

And the mouse began calling louder than ever:

"I'll sharpen a knife, cut the elk's throat and free myself!"

"Please don't cut my throat, please!" the elk pleaded. "Come out through one of my ears!"

"Not I! Your ears are full of wax."

And the mouse called out very loudly indeed:

16 "I'll sharpen a knife, cut the elk's throat and free myself!"
And that was just what it did. What's more, once free, it skinned
the elk and filled seven sheds and seven stores with his
meat.

I had some and so perhaps had you.

The Deer and the Mouse

A Nenets Fairy Tale



A mouse was on her way she knew not where one day, when all of a sudden she met a deer.

"Where do you come from and where are you going, friend?" asked she.

The deer raised his head.

"Can't you see?" said he. "I am going after my own four legs."

Said the mouse:

"Oh, so then *you* don't know where *you* are going any more than *I* do where *I* am. Let's go together!"

"Let's."

So on they went together.

The deer broke into a run, and so fast did he go that it was all the mouse could do to keep up with him.

Whether a long time passed by or not, no one knows, but the deer kept losing sight of the mouse, who would often fall behind him, and only finding her again when she let out a squeak.

"Ah, my friend; my dear friend, there you are!" he would say.

This happened several times until at last the mouse spoke up.

"I'm tired of running after you, deer," said she. "Let's play hide-and-seek for a change!"

It was as if the deer had been waiting for these words.

"Good idea. Let's!" he cried.

"Which of us will hide first?" the mouse asked.



18 "You are much smaller than I, so I will," the deer replied. "Don't look now!"

"All right!" agreed the mouse, but instead of closing her eyes and turning away, she darted into a mouse hole.

The deer ran off a little way and lay down in the hollow of a dried-up creek.

The mouse sprang out of the hole and began looking for him, she looked and she looked till she was quite worn out, but find him she could not.

"I'll get the better of that giant of a deer by cunning!" said she to herself, and she shouted at the top of her voice:

"Hey there, deer, don't you know how to hide? Your horns are showing!"

"My, how silly of me not to have hidden my horns!" thought the deer.

He left the hollow and came towards the mouse.

"Now it's my turn to hide!" said the mouse.

But of course, being a mouse, she could not go very far, so she hid herself at the deer's very feet.

The deer looked here and he looked there, he looked for a long time, but he could not find her. Feeling hungry and spent, he began nibbling at the moss under his feet, and he swallowed the mouse together with the moss.

After a time, when he had had his fill, the deer lay down for a rest. But the mouse gnawed a little hole in his side between two of his ribs and slipped out.

"You are big but foolish, my friend," said she. "I who am so much smaller than you have proved to be the stronger. There's enough of you here to feed my children and the children of my children."

The mouse wanted to skin the deer, but so thick and furry was his hide, that try as she would she could not.

So what did she do but call a sea-gull.

"Sea-gull, sea-gull!" cried she. "I have killed a deer. Come and skin him for me."

The sea-gull came flying. He tried to skin the deer but could not. So what did the mouse do but call a raven.

"Raven, raven!" cried she. "I have killed a deer. Come and skin him for me."

The raven came flying. He tried to skin the deer but could not and only plucked out his eyes.

"Who will skin the deer for me, I wonder?" thought the mouse.

She looked, and there running towards her came a fox and a wolf.

Seeing the deer, they stopped dead.

"Good for you, mouse!" cried the fox. "That is a fine, meaty deer by the looks of him. But you must be tired. Why don't you take a nap? The wolf and I will skin the deer and wake you as soon as we're done."

The mouse, taken in by the fox's friendly words, laid her head on her front paws and fell fast asleep.

She was awakened by the fox.

"Get up, mouse!" she called. "Your deer is all skinned. Time to eat!"

Up sprang the mouse and ran to the spot where she had left the deer. Alas! Nothing was left of him but his horns and hoofs, and as for the fox and the wolf, they were gone without a trace.

The mouse was very angry, but what could she do! She had got the better of the deer, but the fox and the wolf had got the better of her.

Why the Fur on the Fox's Breast Is White

A Nganassan Fairy Tale



There was once a raven who was sitting by his nest on the branch of a tree one day holding a piece of meat in his mouth when a fox came up to the tree.

"How handsome you are, so dark and sleek!" said she to the raven. "And you must sing well too. I'd love to hear you!"

These words pleased the raven. He gave a croak, the piece of meat dropped out of his mouth, and the fox snatched it up and ate it.

"I'll eat up one of your chicks too," said the fox.

"No, you won't!" said the raven. "You'll never be able to fool me any more. And besides, how'll you climb the tree?"

"Why should I climb it?" the fox brought out. "I'll chop it down with an axe, that's what I'll do. Here's the axe, see?" And she pointed at her tail and struck the tree with it.

The raven was frightened. He begged the fox not to chop down the tree and himself threw her one of his chicks. The fox ate it and went away, and the raven sat on the tree branch and wept.

Just then a little white bird came flying up.

"Why are you crying, raven?" it asked.

The raven told it what the fox had done and how he had given his chick to her, and the bird said:

"I never knew you were so foolish, raven! That was no axe the fox struck the tree with, that was her tail. She couldn't have done you any harm. Why did you give up your chick to her?"

Some time passed by, and the fox came to hear what the little white bird had said to the raven.

"You wait, I'll pay you back, little bird!" said she.

One day she lay resting in the woods when the little white bird flew up to her and perched nearby.

"I'm glad you've come," said the fox. "I have fleas in my head. I wish you'd pick them out for me."

Knowing the fox to be very sly, the little white bird dared not come close and began hopping and skipping about a little distance away from her.

Said the fox:

"It's silly to be afraid when you're so quick and nimble. Come, perch on my head and see if you can find the fleas."

The bird thought it over, and then it settled on the back of the fox's head and began picking out the fleas with its beak.

The fox saw that she would be hard put to it to catch the bird. So she stretched out her front paws and laid her head on them.

"Come, little bird, perch there!" said she, pointing at the tip of her nose.

The little bird perched on the fox's nose, but when the fox lifted one of her paws and made to catch it, away it flew, losing one of its feathers as it did so. This clung to the fox's breast and stained it, and that is why the fur on the fox's breast is white to this day.

The Wood Grouse, the Duck and the Goose

A Keti Fairy Tale



One day a duck and a goose met an old wood grouse.

"Fly south with us, wood grouse," said they. "You don't want to die of hunger here in winter."

"I can't go with you," the wood grouse replied. "It'll go hard with the people here if I do."

"Well, we're going away just the same, it's much too cold here in winter," said the duck and the goose. "And nothing will happen to the people without us, either. They can feed on fish. The fish aren't going anywhere. They live in the lakes and never leave them, summer or winter."

Said the wood grouse:

"When the frosts come, the lakes and the rivers will freeze and be blanketed with ice. The people will find it hard to get at the fish, and if I'm not here they will starve to death."

"And what are you going to eat?"

"Oh, I'll be all right. I can make do with cedar bark."

"You can't survive on that very long. If you don't come with us of your own free will, we'll make you come!"

And catching the wood grouse by the crop, the goose and the duck began dragging him after them.

The wood grouse burst out crying and so hard did he cry that the feathers over his eyes turned red. Disgusted, the duck and the goose let go of him and flew south, leaving him behind. But to this day all wood grouse have red feathers over their eyes.

The Fox and the Burbot

An Evenk Fairy Tale



One day a fox saw a burbot lying on a river bank. He lay by a stone and never stirred.

"Are you asleep or just lying there, burbot?" asked the fox. "I've been told that you can't run."

"I can run no worse than you," the burbot replied.

"What a braggart you are! Let's run upstream to the river head. You'll be left behind soon enough."

To this the burbot agreed, and the fox said that she would pause at the river's every bend and call to him.

"Be sure to reply to me," said she. "I have to know where you are."

"All right," said the burbot. "Let's go!"

There was nothing more to wait for, so off they started. The fox ran along the bank, and the burbot swam up the river, and the two of them made so much noise that it carried all over.

Now, the fox wanted to trick the burbot and get ahead of him. So, with that in mind, she left the winding bank and took a short cut straight across the point. She knew that the river had many twists and turns, but what she did not know was that from mouth to head it teemed with burbots.

The burbot swam a little way up the river, and, seeing a friend of his, asked him to pass on to all burbots living upstream that he and the fox were running a race and that when they heard the fox calling "Where are you, burbot?" to call back in reply "Here I am!"

The fox, who was always tricking now the glutton and now the wolf, was bent on tricking the burbot. But she was still far away, and already the burbot's friends were waiting for her.

The fox ran out on to a high sand bar.

"Where are you, burbot?" she called.

"Here I am!" came the reply.

It was not the burbot she was racing who answered her but a friend of his further upstream, but how was she to know it!

Off ran the fox again straight across the forest and she never stopped till she reached the river's second bend.

"Where are you, burbot?" she called.

"Here I am!" came the reply.

The burbot had got ahead of her again, the fox saw, and she ran faster in order to overtake him. But no matter where she paused or from what spot she called to him, she found that the burbot's reply always came from somewhere ahead of her.

The fox would not give in. She found another road that led to the river head, one that was even shorter, and she ran along it as fast as she could.

She heard the river gurgling somewhere very close, and she ran toward it, telling herself that surely this time she would have left the burbot behind.

"Where are you, burbot?" cried she.

"Here I am, fox! You do take a long time running!" came the reply.

The fox looked, and there, just ahead of her, lying on his side in the stream, was the burbot!

And ever since everyone has been calling the fox a braggart, while the river where the race was run is known to this day by the name of Burbot River. For, you see, the fox can fool all the fishes and all the animals, but she cannot fool the burbot.

Shrill-Voice the Partridge

An Elven Fairy Tale



Shrill-Voice the Partridge was sitting in a tree one day when something fell on her head.

"The sky is falling down!" Shrill-Voice cried. "I am going to go and tell the Eagle about it."

She started on her way, she walked and she walked and she met Long-Neck the Wood Grouse.

"Hullo, Shrill-Voice!" said Long-Neck. "Where are you going?"

"To see the Eagle. The sky is falling down, so I want to tell him about it," Shrill-Voice replied.

"May I come with you?"

"Go ahead!"

Long-Neck the Wood Grouse joined Shrill-Voice the Partridge, and off the two of them started together. They walked and they walked and they met Fat-Sides the Duck.

"Hullo, Shrill-Voice! Hullo, Long-Neck!" Fat-Sides said. "Where are you going?"

"To see the Eagle. The sky is falling down, so we want to tell him about it."

"May I come with you?"

"Go ahead!"

Fat-Sides the Duck joined Shrill-Voice the Partridge and Long-Neck the Wood Grouse, and off the three of them started

together. They walked and they walked and they met Grey-Back the Hazel Grouse.

"Hullo, Shrill-Voice! Hullo, Long-Neck! Hullo, Fat-Sides!" Grey-Back said. "Where are you going?"

"To see the Eagle. The sky is falling down, so we want to tell him about it."

"May I come with you?"

"Go ahead!"

Grey-Back the Hazel Grouse joined Shrill-Voice the Partridge, Long-Neck the Wood Grouse and Fat-Sides the Duck, and off the four of them started together. They walked and they walked and they met Trixy-Vixy the Fox.

"Hullo there, everyone!" said Trixy-Vixy. "Where are you going?"

"To see the Eagle. The sky is falling down, so we want to tell him about it."

"You've taken the wrong road! I can show you the right one if you like."

"Do please, Trixy-Vixy! We're in a terrible hurry."

"Come along, then!"

Off made Trixy-Vixy the Fox at a trot, and Shrill-Voice the Partridge, Long-Neck the Wood Grouse, Fat-Sides the Duck and Grey-Back the Hazel Grouse followed her as fast as they knew how. They walked and they walked and they came to Trixy-Vixy's house which was nothing more than a dark hole in the ground.

"Here we are!" said Trixy-Vixy. "This is the Eagle's house. I'll go in first and you must come after me."

Trixy-Vixy slipped into the hole, sat down there very quietly and waited.

The first to come in after her was Long-Neck the Wood Grouse, and she grabbed him and cut his throat and threw him behind her.

After Long-Neck the Wood Grouse came Fat-Sides the Duck, and Trixy-Vixy grabbed her and cut her throat too.

After Fat-Sides the Duck came Shrill-Voice the Partridge, but when Trixy-Vixy the Fox tried to grab her she gave such a loud cry

that Grey-Back the Hazel Grouse heard her and rushed into the fox hole to help her out. The two of them fell on Trixy-Vixy and gave her a terrible hiding and then, before she could turn on them, ran off home as fast as their legs could carry them. 27

And so no one ever told the Eagle that the sky was falling down.

The Greedy Wood Grouse

An Elven Fairy Tale



One day late in autumn the birds gathered at the edge of a forest. They had been making ready for their journey south for seven days, and now it was time to be leaving.

"All here? Come, speak up! All here? Come, speak up!" they called to each other.

And, as it turned out, they were all there, indeed, all that is, but the Wood Grouse.

The Golden Eagle struck a dry twig once and then again with his humped beak, and he told a young Grey-Hen to go and fetch the Wood Grouse.

The Grey-Hen fluttered her wings and off she flew into the thick of the forest. She looked, and there was the Wood Grouse perched on a cedar, busy picking the nuts out of the cones.

"We are all very eager to fly south, my dear friend," the Grey-Hen said. "You alone are keeping us waiting."

"Now, now, don't speak nonsense!" the Wood Grouse returned. "Why should we hurry? There is no end of nuts left in the forest. It's silly to go and leave them!"

The Grey-Hen flew back to the edge of the forest.

"The Wood Grouse is gorging himself on cedar nuts and has no intention of going south," she announced.

There was no help for it, so the Golden Eagle sent the fast-winged Hawk to fetch the Wood Grouse.

The Hawk flew into the thick of the forest and began wheeling over the cedar. The Wood Grouse was still perched there, making a squeaky little noise as he picked out the nuts with his beak.

"Hullo there, Wood Grouse!" called the Hawk. "We have been waiting for you for nearly a fortnight! It's high time to fly south."

"What's your hurry?" the Wood Grouse returned. "We can always do that. A hearty meal is just what one needs before a journey."

The Hawk flew back to the forest edge and told the others that the Wood Grouse was in no hurry to join them and fly south.

Now, this made the Golden Eagle very angry, and he decided to wait for the Wood Grouse no more. Up he soared to the sky and away he flew, and all the other birds flew after him.

The Wood Grouse stayed up in the cedar picking the nuts out of the cones for another seven days, and it was only on the eighth day that he stopped eating and began cleaning his beak and feathers.

"I don't think I can eat any more nuts," said he. "I'll have to leave some for the squirrels."

And off he flew to join the other birds.

He came to the forest edge, and he could not believe his eyes! For the cedars there had lost all their needles, their branches were bare and brown and their trunks as white as if covered with snow. It was the birds who, while waiting for him for fourteen long days, had pecked all the needles and in trying to clean their feathers had rubbed themselves against the trunks and turned them white.

The Wood Grouse burst out crying.

"I'm the only one of all the birds to be left in the forest," he sobbed. "How will I spend the winter all by myself?"

And so hard did he cry that the feathers above his eyes turned red.

And in all the years since, whenever the Wood Grouse's children, grandchildren or any of his kin have heard this story, they have wept bitterly. That is why there is not a wood grouse in the forest today whose feathers just above the eyes are not as red as rowan berries.

The Bear, the Glutton* and the Wolf

An Elven Fairy Tale



Once upon a time there lived together a Bear, a Glutton and a Wolf. They were good friends and never quarrelled, but one day quarrel they did, and they never made it up to the end of their days. This is how it came about.

The Glutton had a young sister who, when she grew up, became very, very beautiful. The Wolf wanted to marry her and he said to the Glutton:

"Do let me marry your sister, Glutton."

"Oh, no, Wolf, you are no match for her," the Glutton said. "You are grey and were born of the snow while we gluttons are black and were born of the earth."

They argued for a long time but could not agree, and at last the Wolf said:

"Let us go to our elder brother the Bear. Let him decide which of us is right."

They came to the Bear's house, and Wolf said:

"We have come to beg you to be our judge, O Bear our elder brother, and to tell us which of us is right. I have asked the Glutton to let me marry her sister, but she won't. That is why we have quarrelled."

"It is a bad thing that you cannot agree," said the Bear. "You will be punished for it. From now on, Wolf, you will live all by

yourself, apart from everyone else, and will have no more than three young ones a year. And you, Glutton, will have no more than one. Also, many of your children will get caught in traps and die, and you too will meet your death that way." 31

The Bear's words only saddened the Wolf who went off home without replying, but they made the Glutton very angry.

"You have put a curse on me, Bear!" cried she. "Well, I shall put a curse on you in return! From now on you will spend all your winters sleeping in a hole which you will dig out for yourself. And it is in winter that men will come and kill you."

And things turned out just the way the Bear and the Glutton said they would. The Wolf has no more than three young ones a year, and the Glutton only one; the Glutton's young are forever getting caught in traps and dying, and the Bear sleeps in his lair all winter.

The Bear and the Chipmunk

An Elven Fairy Tale



Once upon a time there lived a Bear. All winter long he slept in his lair, but with the first rays of the sun, when the snow began to melt and to turn into running streams of water, he woke and came out into the open. He had eaten nothing all winter and was very hungry.

Off went the Bear to look for food. He looked and he looked but found nothing except a tree-stump. Feeling very cross, he seized the stump with both front paws and began trying to pull it out of the ground. But so hungry and weak was he, that he could not do it.

Just then who should come wriggling out from under the tree-stump but a Chipmunk. The Chipmunk had a hole under the stump, and, like the Bear, had slept in it all winter long.

"Why are you so cross, Grandpa?" asked he of the Bear.

"I am very hungry, that's why," the Bear replied. "Have you anything you could give me to eat?"

"Wait here, I'll bring you something," said the Chipmunk.

And scrambling down into his hole and then out again, he placed before the Bear many nuts and sweet roots, his whole autumn's supply.

"Here, Grandpa, eat!" said he.

The Bear set to with great gusto and ate up all the nuts and roots.

"You are only a little animal but a nice one," said he to the Chipmunk.

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He stroked the Chipmunk's furry back with his paw and left the mark of his claws there — several rich black stripes. And ever since all chipmunks have had black stripes on their backs.

The Flying Squirrel

A Negidai Fairy Tale



Once there lived a flying squirrel who had five children.
One day a fox came to see her, and a strange fox she was. She liked to make magic and she wore a pair of horns to frighten those she wished to frighten.

"Give me one of your children, Flying Squirrel!" said she.

"I won't, why should I!" Flying Squirrel returned.

"Well, then, I'll gore you to death!"

There was nothing to be done, so Flying Squirrel gave one of her children to Fox.

Fox went away, but she was back again on the next day.

"Give me one of your children, Flying Squirrel!" said she.

"I won't!"

"No? Well, then, I'll gore you to death!"

There was nothing to be done, so Flying Squirrel gave the second of her children to Fox.

Fox went away, but she was back again one the next day.

"Give me one of your children, Flying Squirrel!" said she.

"I won't!"

"Well, then, I'll gore you to death!"

Flying Squirrel gave the third of her children to Fox.

Fox went away, but she was back again on the next day.

"Give me one of your children, Flying Squirrel!" said she.

"I won't!"

"Well, then, I'll gore you to death!"

There was nothing to be done, so Flying Squirrel gave the fourth of her children to Fox. Fox went away, but no sooner was she gone than Grandpa Owl came to see Flying Squirrel. 35

"Why are you crying, Flying Squirrel?" asked Grandpa Owl.

"Because Fox takes my children from me and eats them up," sobbed Flying Squirrel.

"Don't cry any more, Flying Squirrel. If Fox comes again, tell her that you are not afraid of her grass horns. And if she asks you who told you to say so tell her it was I."

On the next day Fox was back again at Flying Squirrel's house.

"Give me one of your children, Flying Squirrel!" said she.

"I won't!" Flying Squirrel replied.

"No? Well, then, I'll gore you to death!"

"I'm not afraid of your grass horns!" said Flying Squirrel.

"Who told you to say that?" asked Fox.

"Grandpa Owl."

"He did, did he? And where is he now?"

"On that hill yonder."

Away went Fox, and when she reached the hill and saw Grandpa Owl, she began to steal up to him very quietly.

"Who are you stalking, Fox?" Grandpa Owl asked.

"A little bird, Grandpa Owl, and please don't frighten it off, it's perching just behind you."

And Fox leapt up to where Grandpa Owl was sitting.

But Grandpa Owl was too quick for her. He caught her in his claws and soared high up into the sky.

All the way to the sea he flew, and, still holding Fox in his claws, said:

"Come, Fox, say: 'We're off to eat Grandpa Owl's fat!'"

"We're off to eat Grandpa Owl's fat," Fox said.

Grandpa Owl let go of Fox, and down she dropped into the sea! At first, as she drifted along, she could only weep, but then she said:

"Turn to stones, the stones of the sea, O my teeth! Turn into a leaf, the leaf of the sea, O my tongue! Turn to clay, the clay of the sea, O my brain!"

A lady seal heard her and leapt up out of the water.

"Why are you crying, Fox?" asked she.

"I am not crying, O Seal, my cousin," said Fox. "I am singing the songs that were sung at my mother and father's wedding. Tell me, Seal, are there many of you? Look up at the sky—those stars up there are my people. Are there many of you, Seal?"

"Very many," Seal replied.

She dived in the sea, and reappeared on its surface again after a few moments followed by a great number of her friends and relations. The whole sea was black with seals.

Fox began counting them.

"One-two, and we'll pass the next by!" called she. "Three-four, and we'll pass the next by. Five-six, and we'll pass the next by."

And as she counted she jumped from the back of one seal to that of another.

"Why aren't you counting them all?" asked Seal.

"I'll do that on my way back," said Fox.

She was close to the shore by then, and she jumped out on to it.

"You saved my life, seals!" cried she. "This just goes to show how close of kin we are, ha-ha! You are as slow of wit as I am quick of foot."

"Liar!" Seal cried. "How dare you mock at us! You'll meet your death at your way's end!"

"No I won't!" Fox called back.

Away she ran, and by and by she saw a burbot swimming in a stream.

"Where are you bound for, Burbot?" she asked.

"Home," said Burbot. "And you, Fox?"

"I'm going in the same direction. Come, let's be off!"

They moved on, Fox running and Burbot swimming, but at every bend of the river Fox would call to Burbot to make sure he was there, and Burbot would call back to her.

By and by Fox came to a place where an old woman was drying bird-cherry fruit. She crept up close and began eating it. She ate till she could eat no more, and then she lay down and fell asleep.

The old woman saw her, went back to her house for a knife, and, coming back again and finding her still there, killed her on the spot. She skinned Fox and stretched out her skin in the sun, and when it was dry made herself a hat out of it. Then she put on the hat and went to feed her dogs.

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So that was that, and Fox, sly as she was, met the end she deserved after all.

The Crow and the Otter

An Orochi Fairy Tale



A Crow once came to pay an Otter a visit. The Otter made the Crow welcome, and, wanting to treat her guest to the best she had in the house, filled a large pot with water and hung it over a fire. As soon as the water was warm the Otter dived into it, and the Crow stood there and stared at the pot in wonder, for she could not understand where her hostess had gone to.

All of a sudden up came the Otter out of the water, and not alone, either, but with a pike in tow. She left the fish in the pot and herself jumped out of it and sat down beside the Crow.

When the pike was all cooked and ready to eat, the Otter offered it to her guest, and she and the Crow had a grand feast.

On the next day, not to be outdone, the Crow, in her turn, invited the Otter to come and see her. As soon as the Otter arrived, the Crow filled a pot with water and hung it over a fire. The water boiled up, and the Crow, deciding to do as the Otter had done, jumped into the pot and was boiled alive!

And thus ended the friendship of the Otter and the Crow.

Birdie-Bird

A Nemets Fairy Tale



One day Birdie-Bird, and a young and handsome bird he was, was sitting in the top of a birch-tree, watching Mousie-Mouse strolling up and down by the door of her earthen hut. Mousie-Mouse was a sweet young thing and she had metal beads and ornaments twined into her plait, and so heavy were they that her head was stiff.

Birdie-Bird flew home to his hut, and he folded his hands and bowed his head in sorrow.

"What is the matter, my dear son, are you ill?" Old Dame Birdie-Bird, his mother, asked.

Said Birdie-Bird:

"I have just seen Mousie-Mouse, and I want to marry her. She is so lovely that I cannot live without her."

"How can you marry a mouse!" Old Dame Birdie-Bird said. "Mice live in earthen huts, and they winter in these parts. But if you live here in winter your tail will freeze to the door, for the door of a mouse's hut is always covered with snow."

But Birdie-Bird would not listen to his mother and kept saying over and over again:

"I want to marry Mousie-Mouse, I want to marry Mousie-Mouse!"

So often did he say it that he fairly dinned it in his mother's ears. In the evening, when Old Man Birdie-Bird, his father, who had been out hunting all day, came home, she said to him:

"We must marry our son, my husband."

Old Man Birdie-Bird thought this over.

"Whom shall we marry him to?" he asked.

"Mousie-Mouse. He saw her today, and he wants no other bride."

"I have seen Mousie-Mouse," said Old Man Birdie-Bird. "She is lovely indeed. Only how can our son marry her?"

They put their heads together, they thought and thought, and decided that they must help their son to marry the bride of his choice.

"I am going matchmaking," said Old Dame Birdie-Bird.

And away she flew for Mousie-Mouse's house.

She reached it soon enough and came inside.

Old Dame Mousie-Mouse, Mousie-Mouse's mother, saw her and could not believe her eyes!

"What brings you here, Old Dame Birdie-Bird?" she asked.

"You never came to see us before."

Said Old Dame Birdie-Bird:

"I have come to speak to you about your daughter Mousie-Mouse. She is at home, is she not?"

Old Dame Mousie-Mouse did not answer at once.

"Yes, she is at home," she brought out at last. "I know now what it is you have come about, and I have this to say: As soon as summer passes and autumn comes you will be going to lands beyond the seas where it is warmer. But my daughter cannot fly. How will she go with you?"

"There is only one way out," said Old Dame Birdie-Bird. "We shall have to leave our son here with you for a year."

Old Dame Mousie-Mouse felt better.

"Now that is different," said she. "If your son will stay here I have nothing against my only daughter Mousie-Mouse marrying him."

They settled it between them, and Old Dame Birdie-Bird flew home.

Old Man Birdie-Bird met her at the door.

"Well, wife, how is it to be?" he asked.

Said Old Dame Birdie-Bird:

"We shall have to leave our son with the Mousie-Mouse family for the winter. They won't let their daughter marry him otherwise." 41

Old Man Birdie-Bird bowed his head.

"All right, let it be so," said he.

Some time passed, and Birdie-Bird and Mousie-Mouse were married. A feast was held to celebrate their wedding, and all the birds and mice gathered for it.

It was getting on for autumn by then, the sky was turning dark, and Old Man Birdie-Bird and his wife prepared to set out for the warmer lands that lay beyond the sea.

"Your mother and I are going away now, and you will be staying here without us through the winter, my dear son," said his father to Birdie-Bird. "But you mustn't worry, for we will be back again as soon as the snows begin to thaw."

And with these words he took wing and flew away together with his wife and the rest of the birds in the flock.

Now that his mother and father were gone, there was nothing to be done, so Birdie-Bird climbed into the mouse hole and lived there for two long, dark months. A blizzard was raging outside and the wind howling, and it was very, very cold.

"It's so dark and smoky in the hut," said he to Mousie-Mouse when he could bear it no longer. "Open the door and let some of this smoke out. I want to see the light of day."

Mousie-Mouse did as he asked, but when Birdie-Bird glanced out of the door his tail froze fast to it. And Mousie-Mouse's brothers at once sprang up, fell on Birdie-Bird and ate him up!

After a time spring arrived and the snows began to thaw. Old Man Mousie-Mouse stepped outside, and, standing at the door, glanced first up at the sky and then down at the ground. He looked, and there coming toward him and skipping from hummock to hummock, was Old Man Birdie-Bird.

"Hullo there, Old Man Mousie-Mouse!" said Old Man Birdie-Bird. "Where is my son? Why hasn't he come out?"

Old Man Mousie-Mouse heaved a heavy sigh.

"Your son is dead," said he. "His tail froze to the door."

"Woe is me! My poor, poor son!" cried Old Man Birdie-Bird.

"But if he is dead, as you say, where is his grave?"

Old Man Mousie-Mouse, who did not know what to say to this, kept silent.

"What? You disdain to answer!" Old Man Birdie-Bird cried again. "Is it to be war between us, then? If so, I shall go and muster a host, and then you will see how bad I, who was always so good, can be."

He flew away, and Old Man Mousie-Mouse said to himself:

"I don't like the look of this. I shall have to muster a host too."

And off he went to do just that.

After a time Old Dame Mousie-Mouse came outside, and, standing at the door, looked about her. She looked to the south and saw something dark there that seemed to be moving toward her.

"That must be a storm-cloud," said she. "A storm is about to break."

She looked again and now saw that it was not a storm-cloud at all but Old Man Birdie-Bird's host with Old Man Birdie-Bird himself at its head.

Old Dame Mousie-Mouse looked to the north, and there, coming toward her, saw any number of mice and ferrets and other little animals, and, at their head, her own dear husband.

The two hosts came together and clashed. They fought for a long time, but neither side could overcome the other. Then Old Man Owl caught up Old Man Mousie-Mouse in his claws and carried him far, far away, and after that the two great hosts parted and waged war no more.

The Raven and the Scrap of Deer Fat

A Chukchi Fairy Tale



A raven once found a large piece of deer fat that some hunters had dropped.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed he, pleased. "Thank you kindly, friends! Now I'll have my fill of fat."

He climbed a tree, the piece of fat in his beak, and attacked it with good appetite. It was a stringy piece and a tough one, and the raven tore at it with his beak and claws, saying the while:

"Oh, how tasty and good this fat is! Caw-caw-caw! I don't know how to thank those hunters enough."

The fox heard him and crept under the tree.

"You-hoo!" called she in a loud voice.

So startled was the raven that down he fell from the tree, head first, straight into a drift of snow, the scrap of deer fat, all that was left of the large piece he had found, rolling from his mouth. And the Fox, who had been waiting for just this, snatched it up and rushed away with it.

By the time the raven had scrambled out of the drift and shaken off some of the snow that was clinging to him she was out of sight.

"Caw-caw-caw!" the raven cried. "Where is my scrap of fat?"

But as it was nowhere to be seen, he cried again:

"Here, piece of fat, here, come back!"

Nothing happened, so the raven soared to the sky and flew away, saying to himself as he flew:

"How very strange! My piece of fat has run away from me!"

The Rabbit Who Frightened a Blue Fox

A Chukchi Fairy Tale



One day a rabbit found a mountain sheep that had been killed by a wolf. He cut it up and was cooking it when a blue fox came up to him.

"Hullo there, rabbit!" said he.

"Hullo!" the rabbit replied.

"How ever did you manage to kill the sheep?"

"Oh, that was simple! I crept up to it and gave a shout, and it was so frightened that down it dropped, dead."

"Teach me how to do it, I want to kill a mountain sheep too!" the blue fox begged.

"Oh, just creep up to one quietly," the rabbit explained, "and when you are very close give a loud shout. That will do it."

"Very well," said the blue fox, "I'll go hunting for one right away."

And off he went. He saw a mountain sheep, crept up very close to it, and gave a loud shout, but, instead of falling down dead, the sheep ran away.

The blue fox went back to the rabbit empty-handed.

"Well, have you killed a sheep?" the rabbit asked.

"No, I haven't," the blue fox replied. "I shouted very loudly, but the sheep ran away."

"Did you call to him as he ran?" the rabbit asked again.

"No."

"How foolish you are! Couldn't even kill a sheep. Had you called 'Stop! Stop!' he'd have dropped dead in his tracks."

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The rabbit's words frightened the blue fox, and, turning tail, he made off from him at a run.

"Oh-oh-oh!" cried he. "I might drop dead, too, if I listen to you, rabbit!"

The Raven and the Owl

An Eskimo Fairy Tale



Believe it or not, but in olden times the raven and the owl were both white as snow.

One day they met in the tundra, and the raven said:

"Aren't you tired of being so white, owl? I know I am. Why don't we each paint the other a different colour?"

"All right," the owl replied. "We can try and see what comes of it, I suppose."

The raven was pleased.

"Good! Good!" he cried. "Let us begin."

And he added:

"You paint me first and then I'll paint you."

"Oh, no," said the owl. "It was you who suggested it, so it's you that has to begin."

"Very well," the raven agreed.

He scraped some of the burnt-out fat from a lamp, and, using that and a large feather plucked out from his own tail, set to painting the owl. He took great care doing it and drew grey spots of every size on each feather, larger ones on the owl's wings and smaller ones on her breast and back.

"Oh, how beautiful I've made you, owl!" cried he when he had finished. "Just look at yourself."

The owl looked at herself and could not get her fill of looking.

"Yes, indeed!" she said at last, pleased. "These spots are lovely. And now let me do the same for you. By the time I get through

with you you'll be so handsome you won't know your own self."

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The raven turned his head toward the sun, squinted his eyes and froze to the spot. He was very eager for the owl to make a good job of painting him.

The owl set about it with great zeal. It took her some time to get done, and when she had, she looked the raven all over. Then, glancing from him to herself, she found that the raven was now brighter and more beautiful than she. Angered that this should be so, she came up close to him, poured what was left of the fat she had been using over him and flew away.

The raven rubbed his eyes, and, seeing that he was now quite black all over, cried:

"Oh, you sharp-clawed owl, oh, you keen-eyed owl, what have you done! You have made me blacker than soot, blacker than night!"

That is the end of my tale, and from that day on never has a raven been seen that was not black.

Tiny Mouse

A Khanti Fairy Tale



Once there lived a tiny little mouse.

Spring came, and he decided to go fishing for sturgeons and burbot. Instead of a boat he used a nut shell, and instead of a paddle, a little trowel.

He paddled along and he sang:

"A little nut shell I have for a boat, wa-wa-wa! A little trowel I have for a paddle, ay-ay-ay!"

He passed a village, and the children called to him from the shore:

"Hey there, Tiny Mouse, come and eat something nice!"

"And what is that?"

"A dish of pike meat."

"Oh no, I don't want it!"

And he paddled on again, singing:

"A little nut shell I have for a boat, wa-wa-wa! A little trowel I have for a paddle, ay-ay-ay!"

He passed another village, and the children called to him from the shore:

"Hey there, Tiny Mouse, come and eat something nice!"

"And what is that?"

"A dish of duck meat."

"Oh no, I don't want it!"

And he paddled on again, singing:

"A little nut shell I have for a boat, wa-wa-wa! A little trowel I have for a paddle, ay-ay-ay!"

Whether a long time went by or not, nobody knows, but he passed a third village, and the children called to him:

"Hey there, Tiny Mouse, come and eat something nice!"

"And what is that?"

"A dish of roe."

"What kind of roe?"

"Sturgeon roe."

"Yum-yum-yum, I love sturgeon roe! Yum-yum-yum, here I come!"

And with that Tiny Mouse pulled in to shore and made fast his boat.

The children placed a dish of sturgeon roe before him, and Tiny Mouse fell to and began eating it with great gusto.

He ate and he ate and he ate till his belly grew tight and round.

"Quick, Tiny Mouse," the children cried, "your boat and paddle have been washed away!"

Tiny Mouse jumped up and ran to the shore, but he stumbled and fell on the way, and his belly burst!

"Oh-oh-oh!" cried Tiny Mouse. "Help me, children! Fetch me a needle threaded with fibre and another threaded with a wax end!"

The children came running, they sewed up Tiny Mouse's belly and set him on his feet.

Tiny Mouse tottered to his boat, climbed into it, and, taking up his trowel, paddled on again. So sad was he that he could not sing, but his boat and his paddle sang in his stead.

"Wa-wa-wa!" went the boat.

"Ay-ay-ay!" went the paddle.

The Carp and the Bear

An Evenk Fairy Tale



A carp, lying in the backwater near the very shore one day and warming himself in the sun, never noticed how his eyes closed and he dozed away. Just then a bear came lumbering out of the forest and down to the shore. He was thirsty and badly wanted a drink of water.

The bear saw the carp, and, striking the water with his paw, flung him out on to the shore.

"I've got you, carp!" cried he. "I'm going to eat you up."

And wanting to swallow the carp, he opened wide his jaws.

The carp saw very well that things looked bad for him and decided to use cunning in order to save his life.

"Wait, bear," said he. "You can always eat me up, for there's no way that I can see for me to get back into the water. So let us hold a little test first just to see which of us is the stronger. I'll stay on the shore instead of you, and you in the water instead of me, and whichever of us can keep it up the longer and stay alive wins."

To this the bear agreed. He was not very hungry, and as it was a hot day with the sun fairly blazing in the sky, he did not mind a bathe. Besides, he felt sure that he could hold out in the water much longer than the carp could on land.

In he dived, and, reaching the river bottom, lay there, holding his breath so as not to get any water in his mouth. He stayed there a long time, but at last, feeling that he would burst, dived out again and climbed out on to the shore. Getting back his breath, he shook

himself and lumbered over to the carp to see if he was still alive. He found him fast asleep, for unlike himself who could not have stood it in the water another minute, the carp felt fine on shore. 51

So angry was the bear that the carp had proved stronger than he that he struck him with his paw with all his might and ran away into the forest without once looking back. The bear's blow landed on the carp's back, flinging him bodily into the water. And it flattened him out besides, so that ever since each and every carp has been as flat as a pancake, whereas, as every old Evenk knows, there was not a one that was not as round as a ball before.

The Tiger and the Boy

An Uchi Fairy Tale



It all happened long, long ago. Out hunting in the forest one day were a man and his son. The son was still a child and could not hunt well, but he helped his father by brewing tea and chopping wood.

Night came, they went to sleep, and the father saw a dream. In the dream a tiger appeared before him and said:

"Leave your son to me. If you don't, I won't let you go home but will kill both of you."

The father rose while the son was still asleep.

"What shall I do?" he asked himself. "Am I to save my life at the cost of my child's? Yet, if I don't leave him to the tiger, both of us will die. This is what I shall do. I will go home and stay there a little while and then come back here again to see how my son has fared."

This settled, the father went home, leaving his son asleep in the forest.

The boy slept on. When at last he woke he looked round for his father, and, not seeing him anywhere, told himself that he must have gone hunting. Throwing on his clothes, he came out of the tent just to see if his father was anywhere near. He looked to all sides of him, and lo!—there, running toward him, was a tiger. Terrified, the boy rushed to a tree and climbed to its very top. It had large, twisting branches that met and interlocked, and when the tiger tried to climb after him he was caught fast and could not move.

Evening arrived, but the father did not come, and the boy, who felt very comfortable in the top of the tree, went to sleep. He slept very soundly and soon found himself dreaming, and in his dream he saw the tiger who wept and sobbed and promised to shower him with all sorts of gifts if only he would rescue him.

The boy woke, and, seeing that the tiger's plight was indeed a sorry one, leapt to the top of another tree and then climbed down to the ground. He brewed some tea, prepared a meal for his father and sat down to wait for him.

Morning came, and the boy took an axe and spent the day chopping the tree which held the tiger prisoner. The tree came down at last, and the tiger, free now, gave three loud roars and stole away into the deep of the forest.

Night came round again, and the boy saw another dream in which the tiger said to him:

"Get up early, set the traps and draw a circle round them."

The boy did as the tiger told him, and on the next day he inspected the traps and saw that there was a sable in each. And this went on for several days on end, the boy setting the traps and getting a rich return for his trouble.

Some time passed, and the father, who had been living at home, decided to see how his son was faring. He came to the forest, and when he neared the tent and saw smoke coiling over it, knew at once that his son was alive. He opened the door, and there, sitting in the tent, was the boy, with sable skins piled all about him!

The father threw his arms round him and kissed him over and over again. They sat down and ate and went to bed, and in the morning set out for home, taking all the sable skins with them.

The Tiger and the Hunter

A Nivkh Fairy Tale



In a certain village there lived a man and his son, and in another house, on the very edge of the same village, lived the man's sister and *her* son.

One day the man went hunting, and he took his son with him. On the way they stopped at the man's sister's house where they were joined by her son. The three of them set out for the forest, and when they reached it, fashioned a tent for themselves out of spruce branches and settled down there. For a full month and a half they hunted, daily setting traps for sables, but not a single sable did they snare.

Some time passed by, and one morning the man looked, and whom did he see lying across the threshold but a tiger. So frightened was he that though they had no water or firewood in the tent and could not so much as light a fire he dared not venture out at all that day. They slept the night through, and in the morning the man rose and said to the tiger:

"Do take pity on us, tiger, and let me and my son go out of the tent. We will leave my sister's son here with you."

The tiger moved aside, and, doing it quietly so as not to wake his sister's son at the same time, the man woke his son. The two of them dressed, crept out of the tent and rushed home.

By and by the sister's son, whom they had left behind them, woke and he saw the tiger lying across the threshold. Tears filled

his eyes, and he sat there without wiping them and watched the beast.

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"Please, tiger, do move aside and let me go out," said he at last. "I won't run away, I promise you, I will only wash and eat."

The tiger moved aside, and the lad came out of the tent, washed his face and hands and chopped some wood. He brought it inside and lighted a fire, and the tiger at once came back and lay down across the threshold again.

The lad cooked himself some food, ate it and then decided to go to bed. He fell asleep at once and he saw a dream in which he seemed to hear the tiger say to him:

"I will come for you tomorrow, my lad, for I need your help. There is a lion in these parts who is out to destroy me and all my kin. He lets out a roar, and we all drop dead; he lets out another roar, and we come back to life. Now, you have true courage, so I am sure that you will succeed in killing this lion."

Morning came, and the lad rose, cooked himself some soup and ate it.

"Let me out, tiger!" he said. "If I am to kill the lion I must make me a good spear."

The tiger moved aside, and the lad picked up an axe and stepped out of the tent. He chose a dry larch, cut it down and fashioned eight spears out of it; together with the iron spear already in his possession, he now had nine spears in all.

"Come, tiger, let us be on our way!" said he.

The tiger rose to his feet, and the lad gathered up all his spears, the one spear of iron and the eight of wood, and climbed on his back.

Off the tiger started at a run, and by and by he brought the lad to a high mountain at the foot of which, stretched out on the grass, lay many tigers. The lad jumped to the ground, and the tigers rose and bowed to him. He looked about him and glanced up at the mountain, and whom did he see coming out of a cave at the top of it but a huge lion! The lion gave a great roar, and the tigers at once dropped to the ground, dead. He gave another roar, and they came back to life. The lion went back into the cave, and the lad took his iron spear and stuck it in the ground. Then he began climbing the

mountain, taking great leaps that carried him higher and higher up its side, and he stuck a wooden spear in the ground at every leap. Seven spears he used up in this way, and, reaching the top of the mountain and the entrance to the lion's cave, forced the lion to come out of it by pricking him with the eighth.

Then, the lion close at his heels, he rushed down the mountain, leaping in order to evade the animal's gaping jaws. Never once did he turn his back on him, but leapt eight times, attacking the lion and wounding him with one of his wooden spears at every leap and finally killing him with the iron one.

The tigers, who had seen it all, now rose, and, coming close to the lad, bowed low to him. And the tiger who had brought him there put him on his back again and took him to the tent. The lad settled down in it, and he set up traps all around it, drawing what looked like sable tracks on the ground with his gloved hand. Many sables did he snare and kill, and, leaving the tent at last, went home to his village. He sold the skins, became very, very rich and lived happily ever after. And that is the end of that.

Little Fox Chachuchanawut

A Koryak Fairy Tale



An old woman once came out of her hut, a low, earthen one, and sat down on its roof with a piece of sewing. All of a sudden whom did she see scratching at the ground just under the hut but Little Fox Chachuchanawut, a well-known thief and slayer of mice and other little animals.

"Come here, Little Fox," said she. "I have plenty of bacon and you can have a piece if you like."

Little Fox Chachuchanawut ran up to her, and the old woman caught her with one quick movement and killed her. Then, dragging the carcass into the hut, she skinned it, cut up the meat and began cooking it. As soon as it was ready she took it off the fire, and, coming out of the hut, settled down on the roof again with her sewing.

The old woman's young son, who had been lying in the hut all this time, now found his voice.

"Come, mother, let us eat!" called he.

But the old woman just sat there.

"Don't be in such a hurry!" said she. "We'll eat soon enough. You're not even hungry yet."

Some time passed by, and the lad grew impatient.

"Come, mother, let us eat!" cried he. "The fox is whole again."

"Later, son, later," the old woman said, "We'll eat soon enough. You're not hungry yet."

58 Some more time passed by, and the mother decided that it was now time to eat. She came into the hut and bent over the pot, and lo!—the meat was all gone and there was nothing there but the stock.

 “Where has the meat gone to?” the mother asked.

 “I told you to come and eat a long time ago,” the boy replied, “but you said I was not to hurry. Well, what happened was that the pieces of meat glued themselves together, the fox became whole again, and she climbed into her skin and ran away!”

Kutkh

An Itelmen Fairy Tale



Long, long ago there lived a man named Kutkh and his wife Mitti. One day Kutkh took his fishing rod and set out for the seashore. Once there, he cast his line and began to fish. He caught many fish, but he threw the small ones into the sea and only kept the big ones. These he harnessed to his sledge and rode home.

On the way he said to the fish:

"Be sure to run fast and smoothly, and then I'll feed you well: you'll get a slice of dried meat at every stopping-place."

They came home, and Mitti prepared a mess of flour and walrus meat to feed the sledge-fish with. Kutkh put a potful of the mess on the sledge, and set out from home again. Goaded on by Kutkh, the sledge-fish ran very fast, but when they came to a birch-grove, stopped and said:

"Feed us, Kutkh, we are hungry."

"Just carry me a little way further and I will!" said Kutkh.

The sledge-fish started off again very fast, and Kutkh laughed in delight.

They descended into a hollow, and the sledge-fish stopped again and said:

"We are hungry, Kutkh, feed us!"

"Just carry me a little way further, and I will!" Kutkh replied.

Now, this made the sledge-fish very angry. They gave a jerk and were off in a flash, making straight for the sea. Kutkh was frightened.

60 "Stop!" he cried. "Stop, O fish, I beg and pray, and you'll eat without delay!"

But the sledge-fish did not stop and bore the sledge madly along after them. Terrified, Kutkh tried to jump off, but his foot got caught in the treads of the sledge.

The sledge-fish reached the sea and plunged straight in.

Kutkh nearly drowned and only escaped by the skin of his teeth and he never harnessed fish to his sledge again!

How the Birds Flew North

A Yakut Fairy Tale



Long, long ago, in times immemorial, all the birds who now fly north for the summer used to live in the south the year round.

One day, feeling more than usually hot and cramped, they gathered together and held council.

"We always want for space and food in summer, our eggs rot in the heat and, as a result, we have fewer offspring," said they. "We must find other lands in which to spend the warm months. Let us send one from among us to seek them out."

Everyone agreed with this, and the crane, a clever and cautious if somewhat pompous bird whom all respected, was chosen for the job. He was an excellent flyer and, with his long legs, a tireless walker, and he was given three years in which to fly to the lands of the west, east and north and see which were the most suited for settling in.

Away flew the crane, but no sooner was he gone than his wife took up with the teal. With his brilliant green colouring the teal was the handsomest of the birds. He was also quick, bright, cheerful, and had a way with the ladies. So it is not to be wondered at that Mrs. Crane liked him and took his attentions in good part. The teal moved in with her and the two of them felt very cosy together.

Three years went by, and one night Mr. Crane came back from his travels. Straight for his nest he flew and just missed seeing Mr. Teal who, at sight of him, hid under it.

Said Mr. Crane to Mrs. Crane:

"I have been everywhere, but it is in the north that I have found the best lands of all. They are spacious, pleasantly cool, rich in food, and simply made for breeding the young. But I am no fool. At the meeting tomorrow I shall tell the others that the northern lands are unfit for habitation. This will discourage them for good and all, and then, with none to hamper us, you and I will fly north and live there in ease and comfort."

Mr. Teal, who had heard it all, could stand it no longer and flew out from under the nest.

"Quack-quack!" cried he.

"Did I just see someone flying out from under the nest?" asked Mr. Crane of Mrs. Crane.

"Of course not, don't be silly, my dear!" said Mrs. Crane. "You must have fancied it. Do you know that when you went away I hadn't a single night's peace! I kept hearing things. Someone seemed always to be shouting, or whistling, or singing, or laughing near at hand, or else moaning and weeping."

"Yes, I've been told that such things happen," Mr. Crane agreed.

Now, there lived nearby a duck, Mr. Teal's relation, a pert little talkative thing, and it was to her house that Mr. Teal now flew.

"Mr. Crane is back, did you hear?" he asked.

"What if he is?" said Mrs. Duck.

"He wants to do away with us all, that's what."

"Oh no, it can't be true!" cried Mrs. Duck. "Surely a respectable bird like Mr. Crane would want to do nothing of the sort."

"That's what you think!" Mr. Teal returned. "Let me tell you this. I happened to be near and I overheard him telling his wife that the best lands are found in the north but that he would refrain from informing the others about it and take no one there but his own family."

"The scoundrel!" cried Mrs. Duck. "Well, you wait and see, I'll make him eat humble pie yet. He'll be sorry he ever made fun of my short legs in front of my lady friends!"

A meeting was called, and all the birds, big and small, gathered together. Mr. Crane was the first to speak, and he told them of all that he had seen during his travels.

"I was in the west and in the east too," said he, "and it is the same there as here: just as hot, with as little space and food. But it is far worse in the north. Why, I barely got back alive from the north! It is cold there the year round, with no summer and eternal fog. No plants grow there, and, what is worse, it is inhabited by giant birds who are terribly fierce and whose beaks and claws are as sharp as scythes. Those birds have huge appetites, and anyone who ventures north cannot hope to come back home alive."

"How did you manage it, then?" asked Mrs. Duck, and, turning to face the gathering, said:

"Do not believe what Mr. Crane tells us, friends! He said something quite different to his wife only last night. He is lying to us in order that none but himself might benefit from the riches of the northland."

"How dare you disgrace me before a gathering such as this!" cried Mr. Crane, and, before the other birds could come to her assistance, he fell on Mrs. Duck, clawing and beating her and twisting her legs out of shape. He would have killed her had they not stopped him.

"You should not have done that, Mr. Crane," the birds said.

"How dared you beat up poor little Mrs. Duck, and her, a bird with a family! Why, she is barely alive. It was very bad of you, and we can't trust you any more."

They talked over Mr. Crane's conduct and decided that had he spoken the truth he would not have been so angry with Mrs. Duck who, for her part, was not the least bit to blame. After all, she had to tell them what she knew of Mr. Crane's faithlessness, hadn't she! And now the only thing to do was to send someone else north for a year or so. Whom? Why, the eagle, of course. For was he not wise, and brave, and keen-eyed, and swift of wing as well! As for Mrs. Duck, she was to be treated and fed at Mr. Crane's expense. That would teach him that he was not to take the law in his own hands but leave all important matters for all of the birds to settle together!

There was nothing more to be said, so Mr. Eagle did as he was told and flew north. He stayed there for exactly twelve months and returned in the spring of the following year.

As soon as he was back, the birds gathered together again, and Mr. Eagle told them that he thought the north was a most suitable place for the breeding and bringing-up of the young. It was pleasantly cool there, food was abundant, and no fierce birds such as Mr. Crane had spoken of were in evidence.

The birds now lost no time in preparing for their flight north, and they were about to set off when Mrs. Duck, lame and with one wing out of joint, appeared before them.

"Hear me out, my friends, for there is something I wish to tell you," said she. "Last year it was, and you were all witness to it, that Mr. Crane beat me up for doing nothing worse than speaking the truth. He has left me a cripple, and I don't know what I shall do when the rest of you fly away. If I stay here alone I am doomed to die. So please, please do not forget the straits I am in and do something to help me before you leave."

"Mrs. Duck is right," said the birds. "It is our duty to help her, for unless we do she cannot hope to survive. Now, since it is Mr. Crane who is to blame for her injuries, from now on he shall carry Mrs. Duck on his back whenever we go north. It is no easy task and is really a punishment, but he deserves it, and not only on one but on two accounts. For he tried to deceive us all, remember."

And ever since, whenever the birds have flown north, Mr. Crane has carried Mrs. Duck on his back both ways, on the journey there and on the return journey, too.

How the Peoples of the North Came to Speak Different Tongues

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A Dolgan Fairy Tale



It happened in olden times when the winters were cold and fierce.

One day there was such a terrible snowstorm that the people stayed in their tents and dared not show their noses outside while the geese and other birds dug themselves in in the snow.

Only one man from among them all ventured out, and so brave was he that he set out on a distant journey. He roamed about for a long time and many months passed by before he came at last to a warm and sunny land.

He returned to his people and said:

"I have found a good land, a warm land."

Cheered, the people at once set out for this land, and the birds too flew there, for the teal, the smallest bird among them, had overheard all the man had said and passed it on to the rest.

"Now all know what I had to tell!" the man said, but he himself did not go with the others. He made himself a warm deerskin coat, put it on, and sat there, looking like nothing so much as a strange, fuzzy bird.

Meanwhile the people of his tribe journeyed on. They sought the road to the warm land, and they made their way slowly, holding on to each other. Bows and arrows were their only weapons, and, as they went along, they shot game for food, tying eagle feathers to the arrows in order for them to reach their mark the better.

One day they killed an eagle and began dividing his feathers among themselves, but they could not agree as to who was getting the smaller and who the bigger share.

"You have offended me," one would say to another. "You have given me too few feathers. We cannot speak the same language now, nor shall we ever speak it."

And so bitterly did they quarrel that they quite forgot that they were on their way to a southern land. So that is how it came to be that there are so many different peoples in the North, the Dolgans, the Yakuts, the Evenks, the Nentsi, and many, many others, and that they all speak different tongues.

How the Fox Fooled the Women

An Evenk Fairy Tale



There was once a fox who lived near a camping site.

Learning that the men were out hunting and only the women and children were left in the tents, the Fox came to pay them a visit.

The women were cooking deer meat and eating it, and the Fox smiled when she saw them.

"Why do you eat meat?" asked she. "Fish is ever so much better."

"Where are we to get fish?"

"Ha! I know of a river that's full of fish. I can show it to you if you like."

"Please do!" said the women.

"All right, then. Only have you any flour in your bags?"

"What do you want flour for?"

"The fish won't bait without. So if you want to catch enough fish, take a bag of flour, put it in a boat, and let's be off. We have to be quick and catch the fish now, while they are spawning."

The Fox was in a terrible hurry. She was eager to get far enough away from the camp before the men returned.

The women, who had no suspicion as to what she was after, did as she told them. They took a bag of flour, the last they had, and, getting into a boat of birch bark, rowed up the river.

"The river I am taking you to is quite far from here," the Fox said, "so I think I'll take a nap while you row. There will be many different streams on the way, so each time you come to one, wake

me and ask if that is the one we want. You don't want to miss the fish river, do you!"

The women rowed on, plying their oars and glancing to all sides of them as they did so, and the Fox curled up beside the bag of flour, covered herself with a rug, and, pretending to be fast asleep, began eating the flour.

"Fox! Fox!" the women called. "There's a river ahead."

"That is the Echelga—Not Yet Started," said the Fox. "So don't stop yet."

The women rowed on, and they saw another river ahead.

"Fox! Fox! Wake up!" they called. "There's another river ahead."

"That is the Gachalga—Just Begun, so don't stop," said the Fox.

The women, in a hurry to reach the fish river and catch some fish, took up the oars and rowed on again as fast as they could.

By and by they saw a third river.

"Fox! Fox! Wake up!" they called. "Isn't that the fish river now?"

But the Fox pretended to be asleep and did not reply.

"Fox! Fox! Wake up!" they called again. "We'll pass the fish river."

"We won't," replied the Fox in a sleepy voice. "That's the Adalga—Less and Less."

The women rowed on, and so hard did they ply their oars that the sweat poured down their faces. And the Fox went on eating the flour and snoring a little to make them think she was asleep.

By and by the women saw a fourth river.

"Fox! Fox! Wake up!" the women called. "There's a fourth river ahead! Take a look and see if it isn't the fish river."

Careful not to show her muzzle, which was white with flour, the Fox peeped out from under the rug.

"You're going far too slowly," said she. "That's only the Kaltalga—Half Gone."

The women rowed on, plying the oars harder than ever in order to reach the fish river, and the Fox went on eating the flour.

Far up ahead, beyond a high, jutting stretch of land, the fifth river now came into sight.

"We are coming to a river," said the women. "Maybe that is the fish river."

"No, that is the Herelgei—A Last Swallow, but we will reach the fish river soon."

They rowed on again, and by that time the Fox was busy polishing off the little that was left of the flour.

By and by the women saw a sixth river ahead.

"Fox! Fox! Wake up!" they called. "What river is that yonder? See if it isn't the fish river. We're tired and hungry."

"That's the Manalga—Nothing Left, and that is where we're going to fish. Pull in to shore now."

The women did as they were told, and the Fox jumped out of the boat and on to the shore.

"I have a bellyache," said she. "Wait here while I run to the forest for a minute. If I'm not back soon you can cast the nets and throw in the lines without me. I've cleaned out the bag of flour for you to put the fish in."

And with that the Fox ran away, leaving the women without the flour and without fish as well.

It was from that day that all women came to hate all foxes and all foxes to fear all women.

In later times, a group of women once caught a fox and chased it up a tree.

"Don't set the tree on fire, please!" the fox called.

But the women would not listen to her. They set fire to the tree, and, in order to escape, the fox jumped over the flames. So singed was she that she who had been black became red all over, and so now are all her kin.

**The Mistress
of the Sea**
An Orochi Fairy Tale



Once there lived an old man. He lived on the shore of a river, close to its mouth, and he caught and dried fish for a living.

Now, this old man had a tame bear living with him, and he loved and cherished this bear like his own son. The old man would go out to fish, and the bear, whose name was Oko, would go with him.

One day the old man saw a seal on the shore.

"I am going to kill the seal," said he to the bear, "and make myself a cover of her skin. Watch the boat, Oko."

The old man crept up to the seal and struck her a great blow with a stick! The blow stunned the seal, and the old man seized her by the flippers and began trying to drag her higher up the shore. To his dismay he found himself being dragged into the sea instead, and, before he could do anything, was carried off to its bottom.

In the morning, the old man woke up and found himself in a large house, the seal, and a beautiful spotted creature she was, beside him. The house had no doors, but there was an open hearth in it, and the floor was lined with fur skins on which stood bowls of food.

"Where am I?" thought the old man, but he dared not ask the question aloud.

It was the seal who addressed him first.

"You wanted to kill me," she said. "Why?"

"Are you a seal or a woman?" the old man asked.

"I am the mistress of the sea."

"Oh my, I nearly killed the mistress of the sea!" thought the old man.

"You must give me your bear. If you don't, I will kill you," said the seal.

"All right, you can have him!" the old man hastened to agree. "Just let me go free, that's all."

"Tell me about yourself first," the seal said. "I want to know what you do for a living."

Said the old man:

"I am many years old, but I live alone, in a tent near the mouth of the river Tym. I catch seals and fish for a living the year round, and in autumn and winter I hunt for wild animals. But I must admit I find this very hard to do at times."

"Just throw tobacco and food of all kinds in the water for me, and I will send you many seals and fishes in return," said the seal.

"All right, but how am I to get home now?"

"I will take you there myself in a boat, and you will give me your bear when we get there."

Off they set together in a boat and by and by reached the old man's tent.

"You will go with the mistress of the sea, Oko," said the old man to the bear, and, turning to the seal, added: "He is yours now, seal, you can take him with you."

"Good!" said the seal. "I will send you many fishes and seals, just as I promised. You will want for nothing for three years."

And so it came to be. For three years on end the seal who was mistress of the sea sent fishes and seals to the old man, and he became very, very rich.

But this is only a fairy tale and none of it really happened at all.

The Tale of the Half-Moon

A Keti Fairy Tale



Long, long ago there lived two orphans, a brother and a sister. Their parents had died when they were little, and life was hard for them at first, but as they grew older things became easier. But the brother soon tired of seeing nothing but the tent they lived in and the forest roundabout and longed to learn for himself what lay in the world beyond. He began going farther and farther from the tent and roaming the earth for days and months on end, and he took in all he saw about him and noted who lived where.

Now, high up in the sky there lived the Sun Woman. There was no one to keep her company, and she was very lonely.

One day she looked down at the earth and saw a man wandering round there and glancing up at the sky now and again.

"What a handsome man that is!" said she to herself. "And he keeps glancing up at me all the time. How I wish I could get him up here! Only how am I to go about it? He's so far below that I can't reach him."

And the Sun Woman began pleading of the sky to give her wisdom, so that she might think of a way of reaching the man and carrying him away with her.

"You don't need me to tell you how to do it, Sun Woman," said the sky. "You have long arms and need only stretch them out a little to get that which you have set your heart on."

In the morning the Sun Woman rose, and she began stretching her arms toward the earth, trying to touch it. This she succeeded in

doing soon enough, and at once it became very light and warm there. Seeing the man walking along below, she began trying to touch him too. She stretched out her arms to him, and he felt the warmth of her and stopped.

"Why has it become so hot all of a sudden?" said he to himself. "I think I'd better lie down so as to cool off."

And he flung himself down on the ground. But the Sun Woman would not give up. She kept stretching her arms out more and more, till at last she reached the man, and, snatching him up, carried him off to the sky with her.

The man lived in the sky for a week, and he felt that he could bear it no more. He thought of his sister who was left below and felt sorry for her and lonely too.

"I don't like living in the sky here with you, Sun Woman," said he. "I am a man and cannot live so high up. Let me go back to the earth where I belong!"

"Are you sure you really want to go back?" the Sun Woman asked. "Have you forgotten how you used to wander round the earth and long to be up here with me? You told yourself then that wherever I was must be a wonderful place and you wanted to meet me and get to know me better."

But the man would not listen to her.

"Let me go!" said he again. "Let me go, for I feel I have forgotten something on the earth that I must go back for. I will take it and then return to you."

"You'll never return, I know it!" the Sun Woman said. "Nothing good awaits you there. The evil spirits will do away with you!"

"They won't!" the man insisted. "Let me go, Sun Woman!"

The tears came to the Sun Woman's eyes and stung them.

"You will not return," she said again. "The evil spirits will do away with you, and I will be left all alone here."

But after a time, seeing that no words of hers made any impression on him, she decided to let him go for a little while.

"Very well," she said, "I will do as you ask. I will let you go, and I will give you a comb and a whetstone to take with you and keep you safe from the evil spirits."

The man was overjoyed.

"Do not cry, Sun Woman," he said. "I will come back, I promise you."

The Sun Woman struck the sky with her head, and lo!—a winged horse appeared. She gave the man the horse and a comb and whetstone besides, and the man got on the horse's back and away he flew!

Whether two years passed by or three, nobody knows, but he came at last to his homeland and after flying over it several times found his tent. But he did not know that in his absence Khossyadam, the evil sorceress, had eaten up his sister and taken her shape.

The man came down to earth on his winged horse, tethered the horse to a tree and ran to his tent. He looked, and there was his sister, as he thought, sitting in it and waiting for him. She seemed to be glad to see him, and, picking up a pot, ran to the river for water. She brought the pot back full, hung it over the fire and asked him if he would like something to eat. He said he would indeed, and she came out of the tent again and up to the horse, cut off the horse's hind leg, and, coming back inside, thrust the leg into the pot.

The two of them sat there talking happily to each other, but all of a sudden the man looked, and what did he see sticking out of the pot but the leg of a horse! He knew then that it was not his sister there beside him but the evil sorceress Khossyadam in her shape. He snatched the horse leg out of the pot and ran as fast as he could to where his horse was waiting for him. He knew that if he tarried Khossyadam would do him to death and made haste to get on the horse's back.

But here was a problem—how was the horse to run on only three legs? He could not stick the fourth leg back on so quickly, not properly, anyhow, but there was nothing to be done, so he stuck it on the best way he could and rode off at a gallop, Khossyadam running after him in pursuit.

The horse's bad leg ached, it was hard for him to run and he soon stumbled and fell. The man left him there and set off on foot at a run, but he could not get very far that way, could he! He glanced at the sky, and he saw the Sun Woman looking at him pityingly,

for Khossyadam was close at his heels now and about to seize him.

The man remembered the whetstone the Sun Woman had given him and flung it behind him. At once a huge mountain rose up out of the ground between him and the sorceress. Khossyadam flew into a rage, she began throwing round the stones and gnawing at the mountain with her teeth. She gnawed it through at last and hurried after the man, and, though he had been well ahead of her, soon caught up with him. She was about to seize him when the man remembered the comb, the second of the Sun Woman's gifts. He flung the comb behind him, and at once such a dense forest grew up between him and Khossyadam that none could make their way through it. Khossyadam began gnawing at the trees and felling them one after another, and the man walked on.

Whether he was long on the way or not, nobody knows, but he was very tired and hungry after a time and felt that he was on his last legs. Meanwhile, Khossyadam had pushed through the forest and was fast gaining on him, her hand stretched out to seize him.

The Sun Woman saw that the man was in a bad way and that Khossyadam would carry him off before another minute was up. So she stretched out her hand and caught the man by the leg! But she was not quick enough, for Khossyadam caught him by the other leg at the very same time. They each began pulling at the man, the Sun Woman trying to drag him up into the sky, and Khossyadam, down to the ground. They pulled and they pulled, and lo!—they tore the man in two.

The Sun Woman got the half without the heart, and she carried it to her home in the sky. She tried very, very hard to bring it back to life, but all in vain, for it would revive for only a day or two and then die again. She put a live coal in its breast in place of the heart, but even so it only stayed alive for a week.

The Sun Woman was quite overcome with grief after a while and could do nothing but weep.

"I have no more strength left and can do nothing more for you!" said she at last, addressing the man or, rather, the half of him that belonged to her. "Go to the other end of the sky and stay there. From now on we will be parted and will only see each other on the

longest day in the year and even then it will be no more than a glimpse."

And with these words the Sun Woman lifted the half-man and flung him to the dark part of the sky where her rays did not reach. And there the half-man remained, turning into a half-moon that wanders over the sky the year round.

Because he has no heart, his other half, the one with the heart having been carried off by Khosayadam, his rays are cold, and he and the Sun Woman only see each other once in the year.

The Silver Maid

A Sacred Fairy Tale



In a certain village beyond the town of Kandalaksha there lived a maid who could run very fast. Many young men wooed her, but she declined to accept any of them and would run away from them into the forest.

Now, in the village of Lovozero there lived a youth who could run as fast as the maid. Hearing about her and feeling sure that she could not run away from him, he resolved to marry her.

He came to her house, but the maid ran away into the forest, and it was there that he now followed her.

So sure was the maid that none could catch her that she was not afraid to reply to any who called to her. The youth would call to her, and she would call back and then run off again.

They ran around in the forest for a long time, and, seeing that the maid was harder to catch than he had thought, the youth decided to chase her up a high mountain. With this in mind, he kept hard on the maid's track and forced her higher and higher up the mountain. The maid reached the top, and, fearful of being caught, leapt high into the air.

The youth, who was all spent by that time, did not see her do it. He saw nothing but the bare mountain top, with no one on it, and he dropped to the ground like a felled deer.

Seeing him, the maid at once descended to the ground and bent over the youth. She saw that he was in a bad way and close to death, and her fear passed and was replaced by a deep pity.

Inianavyt did as she was told. She combed her hair and put on her best robes, and she looked very, very beautiful.

She came to the house of Velvymtilyn the Raven and sat down near it, and, seeing her, Velvymtilyn's wife went to wake her husband.

"Get up and stop pretending!" said she. "Someone has come to see you."

"Who?" Velvymtilyn asked.

"Inianavyt, daughter of Ememkut."

Velvymtilyn looked at Inianavyt, and the sight of her made him laugh he was so pleased. So hard did he laugh that he spat out the sun, and at once the skies cleared and the blizzard ended.

"And now let us go to see Ememkut your father," said Velvymtilyn to Inianavyt.

Off they rode together side by side in two sledges, but by and by Inianavyt reined in the dogs and stopped them.

"You go ahead of me, and I'll follow you, Velvymtilyn!" said she.

Velvymtilyn did as she told him, and she took a long, sharp-edged stick, and, flinging it after him, pierced him through! Then she picked up the stick, the raven hanging from it, and held it high.

"That is what Velvymtilyn the Raven gets for swallowing the sun!" said she. "Now the skies will be clear always and there will be no more snowstorms or blizzards."

How the Fox Woood the Dog

A Kerek Fairy Tale



Well, now, the Fox once heard that Ankakumikaityn the Wolf, a nomad and deer-herder, was thinking of marrying a Dog who lived nearby with her brothers and younger sister. He made himself a fur tunic and a pair of fur pants and a fur hat, and, choosing a moment when the brother dogs were out, went to pay the two sisters a visit. He came to their house, had tea with them, and then, turning to the older sister, said:

"I am rich, I own two herds of deer and I have come to ask you to marry me."

Now, the Fox was a sorcerer, and as he spoke he cast a magic spell on the Dog who, because of it, took him for Ankakumikaityn the Wolf and said she was most happy to see him. She treated the Fox to deer meat and sausage and other delicacies and gave him the fattest and best of the pieces.

The Fox sat there eating and dared not take off his hat for fear of being recognised.

"I am much too rich and proud to take off my hat in anyone's house," said he.

All of a sudden there came from afar the barking of dogs. The sisters were overjoyed, but the Fox was frightened. He was about to run away but thought better of it.

"Oh, oh! They'll drive away my deer with their barking, I fear," said he.

Out he ran from the tent and up a nearby hill and he heaped stones on its top, and as soon as the brother dogs came up close, he sent the stones rolling down on them and killed them. Then he came back into the tent, had tea with the sister dogs who knew nothing of what had passed, and in the evening set off homewards, carrying all their supplies of food away with him.

The sister dogs waited for their brothers for a long time, but all in vain. They went to bed, and in the morning saw that all their food was gone. They rushed outside, and there, lying at the foot of the hill, found their brothers, dead.

The sisters burst out crying.

"Who could have done such a terrible thing?" asked the older of the two.

The younger one thought it over.

"The Fox, who else!" said she.

"Why say such things? It couldn't have been him, he wasn't even here," said the older sister.

"Oh, I don't know," rejoined the younger. "When Ankakumikaityn's hat came askew, I thought for a moment that it wasn't he at all but the Fox."

But as this only made the older sister angry, she said:

"Let us go to Ankakumikaityn and find out. Now that our brothers are no longer with us, we will need his help anyway in procuring food for ourselves."

They set out for Ankakumikaityn's house, reached it before long, and, the tears pouring from their eyes, told Ankakumikaityn the whole story.

Ankakumikaityn was much taken aback. Far from having been in their house last night, he told them, he had not been out at all but had kept watch over his storehouse.

It was now clear to the sisters that it had been the Fox who had tricked them and killed their brothers. They decided to revenge themselves on him, and, accompanied by Ankakumikaityn, went back to their tent.

They spent the night there, and on the next day looked, and there, coming toward the tent, was the Fox got up to look like Ankakumikaityn again. The real Ankakumikaityn now hid himself,

and when the Fox came into the tent the older sister invited him to have some tea with her. While the Fox was eating and drinking, the younger sister went out into the passage and put a heavy stone against the door, and, the real Ankakumikaityn coming out of his hiding-place, he and the two sisters seized the Fox and tied him up.

"What shall we do with this thief and murderer?" Ankakumikaityn asked.

"I don't know," said the older sister.

"Well, I do!" said the younger one. "We'll put him in a sack and take him out into the tundra."

And that was exactly what they did. They took the Fox, who was half-dead with fright, to the tundra and laid him on the ground, and the younger sister piled dry grass and brushwood on top of him.

"Let's untie the Fox!" said the older sister.

"Oh no, he'd only run away!" said the younger one.

They argued about it for a long time, but the older sister finally had her way, and, taking the Fox out of the sack, untied him.

The younger sister gathered more dry grass and brushwood, she piled it on top of the Fox and then began heaping stones all around him to make a stove. When the stove, which had only one opening, was built, she lit it and went away, and her sister and Ankakumikaityn the Wolf went with her.

By and by the Fox, who had dozed off, woke up. He was frightened half out of his wits at finding himself inside a lighted stove and began trying to creep out of it. This he managed to do at last, but the coat he had put on for a disguise was burnt to a cinder and his own coat so badly singed that it remained the colour of flame to the end of his days. And that is why there have been red foxes in the tundra ever since.

And the two sister dogs and their friend Ankakumikaityn the Wolf buried the brother dogs and set up house together. The older sister and Ankakumikaityn were married, and the younger sister stayed with them and nursed their children till she too was old enough to wed. And that is the end of that.

The Tiger and the Man

An Udegel Fairy Tale



There was once a Tiger who had lived in the forest so long that he thought himself stronger than anyone in the whole world. He roamed the countryside and put fear in all.

One day, when he had caught and killed his prey and then eaten his fill, the Tiger lay down under a tree for a rest. Suddenly he heard someone calling him. He glanced up, and there, sitting above him on a branch, saw Kua the Bird.

"You think yourself stronger than anyone, don't you, Tiger?" said she. "Well, you are wrong. There are those who are stronger than you."

The Tiger sprang to his feet.

"Stronger than I?" roared he. "It can't be! Come, speak up and tell me who they are."

"Men, that's who!" Kua said, and away she flew.

The Tiger, who had never laid eyes on a man in his life, dearly wanted to see one. Off he went in search of him, he walked and he walked, and he met a Wolf.

"Are you a man?" asked the Tiger.

"No, of course not," said the Wolf. "But what makes you ask?"

"I want to see what a man looks like, that's all."

"Well, that's very silly of you. Men are stronger than you and may kill you," said the Wolf.

Now, this only made the Tiger laugh. On he went, he walked and he walked, and he met a Moose.

"Are you a man?" the Tiger asked.

"No, of course not," the Moose replied. "But what makes you ask?"

"I want to see what a man looks like, that's all."

"Well, that's very silly of you. Men are stronger than you and may kill you," said the Moose.

Now, this only made the Tiger laugh. On he went, he walked and he walked, and he met a Deer.

"Are you a man?" the Tiger asked.

"No, of course not," the Deer replied. "But what makes you ask?"

"I want to see what a man looks like, that's all."

"Well, that's very silly of you. Men are stronger than you and may kill you," said the Deer.

But the Tiger did not believe the Deer any more than he had the Wolf or the Moose and went on again. He walked and he walked, and there before him, standing up on two legs and chopping a tree, was a creature he had never seen before. Now, the Tiger did not know that this was a man, but he kept very still and watched the man from afar before plucking up enough courage to approach him. The Man turned and saw him.

"What do you want?" asked he.

"I want to see what a man looks like," the Tiger replied.

"That is very silly of you!" said the Man. "Don't you know that men are stronger than you and that it is dangerous for you to meet one?"

But the Tiger would not believe him, so the Man said again: "Oh, very well! Just let me tie you to this tree, and you will have your wish."

The Tiger agreed to this, and the Man tied him to the tree, and, bringing a gun, took a shot at him that left him without one of his ears.

The Tiger roared out in pain.

"Let me go!" he cried. "Now I know that you are a man and that you are stronger than I."

- 86 The Man cut the ropes that bound the Tiger to the tree.**
“Be off with you into the forest, then,” said he, “and don’t let a
man come across you again!”
And ever since not only tigers but all animals have feared men
and kept away from them.

Who Is the Strongest of All?

.A Nanai Fairy Tale



There was once a boy who lived in the far north. One day he came out of his tent, slid down the icy slope to the shore of the sea and began playing all kinds of games there.

He played and frolicked for a time, but finally slipped on the ice and fell flat on his back.

"Oh my, ice, you must be awfully strong to have pushed me over like this!" said he.

"That I am!" the ice replied.

"Yes, but if you are so strong, why is it that the sun need only shine on you for a little while for you to melt?" the boy asked.

"Oh well," sighed the ice, "I suppose the sun is even stronger than I."

The boy looked up at the sun.

"Sun, sun, are you very strong?" asked he.

"That I am. Didn't you yourself say just now that I can melt the ice?"

"Yes, but if you are so strong, why is it that the cloud can blot out your rays?" asked the boy.

"Oh, well," sighed the sun, "I suppose the cloud is even stronger than I."

The boy glanced at the cloud.

"Cloud, cloud, are you very strong?" asked he.

"That I am. Didn't you yourself say just now that I can blot out the sun?"

"Yes, but if you are so strong, why is it that you are torn to shreds at the wind's first gust?"

"Oh, well," sighed the cloud, "I suppose the wind is even stronger than I."

"Wind, wind, are you very strong?" asked the boy.

"That I am. Didn't you yourself say just now that I can blow the cloud to shreds?"

"Yes, but if you are so strong, why is it that you can't move the mountain?"

"Oh, well," sighed the wind, "I suppose the mountain is even stronger than I."

"Mountain, mountain, are you very strong?" asked the boy.

"That I am. Didn't you yourself say just now that even the wind can't move me?"

"Yes, but if you are so strong, why do you let the tree grow on your top?"

"Oh, well," sighed the mountain, "I suppose the tree is even stronger than I."

"Tree, tree, are you very strong?" asked the boy.

"That I am. Didn't you yourself say just now that the mountain lets me grow on its top?"

"Yes, but if you are so strong, then why do you let the man cut you down with his axe?"

"Oh, well," sighed the tree, "I suppose the man is even stronger than I."

"Man, man, are you very strong?" asked the boy.

"That I am! Didn't you yourself say just now that I can cut down the tree that grows on the mountain top?" the man replied.

"Then you must be stronger than anyone!" said the boy.

And that is the end of my tale. For there is nothing more to be said, you see.

How a Boy Turned into a Duck

A Negidal Fairy Tale



There once lived a woman and her son. One day she went to get some food from the storehouse that stood on piles a little distance away from the tent, and there was her son calling from under it:

"Give me some fish, mother! I want a piece from the fish's belly."

"Come home and you'll get it! When did I ever let you eat outdoors?" the mother replied.

"Give me some fish, mother! I want a piece from the top layer."

"Come home and you'll get it! When did I ever let you eat outdoors?"

"Give me some fish, mother! I want it cut up in nice, thin slices."

"Come home and you'll get it! When did I ever let you eat outdoors?"

"Give me some fish, mother! I want a piece from the fish's back."

"Come home and you'll get it! When did I ever let you eat outdoors?"

"Give me some fish, mother! I want a piece from the middle layer."

"Come home and you'll get it! When did I ever let you eat outdoors?"

The mother climbed down to the ground, she looked, but her son was nowhere to be seen and only the tracks he left on the snow showed that he had been there. She began searching for him, she

searched and she searched but she could not find him, and this made her feel so bad that she burst out crying.

Day and night she cried and could not stop.

Time passed, it grew warmer outside, and the birds began coming back from southern parts.

"Grouse, grouse! Do you know where my son is?" the mother called.

"Squawk-squawk, no I don't!" the grouse replied.

"Blackcock, blackcock, do you know where my son is?" the mother called.

"Cronk-cronk, no I don't!" the blackcock replied.

"Goose, goose, do you know where my son is?" the mother called.

"Honk-honk, no I don't!" the goose replied.

"Raven, raven, do you know where my son is?" the mother called.

"Caw-caw, no I don't!" the raven replied. "But the birds that are flying behind me might know."

"Swan, swan, do you know where my son is?" the mother called.

"Hoo-hoo, no I don't!" the swan replied. "But I saw him once and I hardly knew him. His feet have turned into a duck's feet and his nose has turned into a duck's bill, and he said to me he said: 'If ever you meet my mother tell her this: Not a piece of fish would you let him have, not from the fish's belly nor from its back, not from the top layer nor the middle one, so now you can eat it yourself!'"

"Duck, duck, do you know where my son is?" the mother called.

"Quack-quack, no I don't!" the duck replied. "But I saw him once and I hardly knew him, and he said to me he said: 'If ever you meet my mother, tell her this: Not a piece of fish would you let him have, not from the fish's belly nor from its back, not from the top layer nor from the middle one, so now you can eat it yourself!'"

"Child, child, come down to me!" the mother called.

"How can I, quack-quack, when my feet have turned into a duck's feet and my nose has turned into a duck's bill!"

And away he flew past her and out of sight.

The Blueberry

A Nenets Fairy Tale



There once lived a girl named Lynzermia who was so small that she could easily hide behind a hummock or a shrub.

One day Lynzermia sat alone, sewing, when all of a sudden it grew dark in the tent.

"Someone must have seated himself right on top of the smoke hole in the roof," Lynzermia told herself.

She lifted her head, and what did she see but a squirrel.

"Go away, squirrel, you're standing in my light, I can't sew when it's so dark," said Lynzermia.

But instead of doing as it was asked the squirrel began throwing cones at the girl.

Lynzermia was very angry.

"I'll kill you, squirrel, if you don't stop!" said she.

But the squirrel went on pelting her with cones, and Lynzermia took up a pole and pretended to strike the squirrel with it. The squirrel was very frightened and she begged Lynzermia to let it go, promising if only she did so to bring her some nice mole skins.

"Very well," said Lynzermia, "only don't forget to do as you say."

Off ran the squirrel, and after a day and a night had passed was back, bringing three tiny mole skins, the tiniest that ever were.

Lynzermia was very pleased. She took the skins, cut them up and made herself a coat, a hat and a pair of mittens out of them. Then she brought out some meat she had in the tent and put a piece on each of the sledges standing outside near it.

Some time passed, and Lynzermia saw two strangers coming toward the tent. They came inside, and Lynzermia rose, went outside and brought in a large piece of meat. A part of it she cooked and a part prepared for eating raw.

"You are a good housekeeper," the men said. "Won't you marry one of us?"

Lynzermia did not know them, and she was frightened. How could she marry someone who came from far away? Why, she would have to follow him and leave her native parts. She thought it all over and then she said:

"How will he I marry take me home with him? What will he carry me in?"

"In his mitten," said the men.

"I'll be squashed."

"In his coat."

"The fur will stick to me."

"In his shoe."

"I'll be trampled on and killed."

"In his hat."

"I'll choke there."

"Where is one to put you, then?"

"In this iron box here."

The men put Lynzermia in a little iron box, locked it and set off homewards.

On and on they walked, and on the way Lynzermia slipped out of the box through the key-hole and fell to the ground. But she caught hold of a little branch as she fell and hid under the leaves. There she sat on the branch, and, not knowing how she was to get back to her tent, cried and wept.

The men came home and unlocked the box. They looked, and lo!—there was no one there. They began searching for Lynzermia, they searched and they searched but they could not find her. And Lynzermia sat on the branch, and so hard did she cry that she

became quite blue in the face after a time. She shrank, too, and became very, very tiny, even tinier than before. She did not know it but she had turned into a berry—a little round blueberry. 93

And if ever you go hunting for it, you won't find the blueberry so easily. It hides behind leaves, for it fears that strangers might find it.

The Burbot and Princess Marya, His Wife

A Nenets Fairy Tale



There once lived an old man and an old woman. They had no children, and the old man made traps of wood and caught fish for a living. One day he was on his way to the tsar's city when, lying before him on a rocky shore, he saw a Burbot. He wanted to kill it, but the Burbot said:

"Spare me, old man, and I will be a son to you."

The old man put the Burbot in a sack, and, throwing the sack over his shoulder, carried it home. He put the Burbot on the bed and said to his wife:

"We have no son, but this Burbot I found will be a son to us."

For three years the Burbot lived with the old man and the old woman and they took good care of him and fed him well. The Burbot grew to manhood, and he said to the old man:

"Go to see the tsar, father, and tell him that I wish to marry his daughter."

Said the old man:

"The tsar won't give up his daughter to such as us, my son. Kings and princes and merchants and others like them have wooed her, but he refused them all."

"That may be so, but you must go just the same!" the Burbot said.

The old man set out for the tsar's house, and when he reached it, was ushered inside.

"What do you want?" asked the tsar.

"My son the Burbot has sent me. He wants to marry your daughter," the old man replied.

"Does he now? Many kings and princes and merchants asked for her hand, but I refused them all."

The tsar's daughter, who was sitting behind a screen, now spoke up.

"What you say is true, father," said she, "but why don't you set him a task as the Russians do? If he carries it out, I will marry him; if not, you will have him put to death."

The tsar bowed his head. He thought for a while and then he raised his head and said to the old man:

"Here is what you must do. You must build a house near my house — my daughter will not live in your old one — and you must do it in the space of one night. If you don't, I will cut off both your head and your son's."

Away went the old man, weeping bitterly and fit to drop so faint was he with fright and sorrow.

He reached his house, and, weeping still, went in to see his son.

"Why are you crying, father?" the Burbot asked.

"How can I help it!" the old man replied. "The tsar will not give his daughter to you in marriage unless we carry out the task he has set us. We are to build a house in the space of one night, and if we fail to do it he will cut off our heads."

"Do not cry, father!" the Burbot said. "Go to bed and sleep, and what is to be will be."

The mother and father went to bed, and as soon as they were asleep the Burbot crawled to the door. He reached the threshold, gave a jump and a leap and turned into a youth so handsome as never was seen. He went outside, he swung his iron staff and stuck it, top first, into the ground; and at once thirty armed men appeared.

"What do you want, master?" asked they.

"Build me a house beside the tsar's own and let it be as rich as his," the Burbot said.

"It shall be done!" the thirty armed men replied, and away they went, the earth trembling and quaking beneath thirty pairs of marching feet.

As soon as they were gone, the Burbot went back to his house. He reached the door, gave a jump and a leap, and, getting back his former shape again, went to bed.

Early the next morning he woke his father and said to him:

"Take an axe, father, go to the tsar's house and see what is to be seen."

The old man set out for the tsar's house, and what did he see standing beside it when he got there but a house that was far more rich and beautiful. Now, the tsar who looked out of the window just then, saw it too.

"The old man's son is no ordinary man to have done what he has done," said he.

The old man went at the new house with his axe, but though he struck it again and again the house only rang with the sound of it and remained as bright and new as ever.

The old man went home, and his son the Burbot met him at the door.

"Well, what did you see, father?" asked he.

"A house that is richer and more beautiful than the tsar's own," the old man replied.

"Go back now and hear what the tsar has to say," said the Burbot.

The old man, much cheered, set out on his way and soon reached the tsar's house.

"What do you want?" asked the tsar.

"My son the Burbot wishes to know what you have to say," the old man replied.

"Well, then, tell him this," said the tsar. "That my daughter will not be wed in the old church and that he is to build a new church as rich as mine for her, and three bridges besides, the first leading from the old church to the new one, the second, from the old house to the new one, and the third, for the newlyweds and guests to use after the wedding ceremony, from the new church to the new house. And if he does not do it in the space of one night, I'll cut off both his head and yours!"

Away went the old man, weeping bitterly and fit to drop so faint was he with fright and sorrow.

"My son the Burbot built a house in the space of one night, but he cannot hope to build a church and three bridges in that time!" said he. "Ah me, he will be the death of me! I should have killed him when I found him." 97

The old man came home, and the Burbot met him at the door.

"Why are you crying, father?" asked he.

"How can I help it!" the old man replied. "The tsar has set us a new task. We are to build a church and three bridges besides, the first leading from the old house to the new one, the second, from the old church to the new one, and the third, from the new church to the new house. And if we don't do it, he will cut off our heads!"

"Go to bed, father, and have a sleep," said the Burbot. "And early tomorrow morning take an axe and set out for the tsar's house."

The old man went to bed, and the Burbot crawled to the threshold, gave a jump and a leap and turned into a youth. He went outside, swung his iron staff and stuck it, top first, into the ground, and at once thirty armed men appeared.

"What do you wish, master?" asked they.

"Build me a church as good as the tsar's own and three stone bridges besides, the first leading from the old house to the new one, the second, from the old church to the new one, and the third, from the new house to the new church!"

"It shall be done!" said the thirty armed men, and away they went.

As soon as the sound of thirty pairs of marching feet had died down, the Burbot came inside, gave a jump and a leap, and, getting back his former shape again, went to bed.

Early the next morning he woke his father and said to him:

"Go to the tsar's house, father, and see what is to be seen."

The old man took an axe and set out for the tsar's house. He got there soon enough, and what did he see but three stone bridges and a brand new church that stood beside the tsar's church but was far richer and more beautiful.

The old man went at the church with his axe, but though he struck it again and again it only rang with the sound and remained

as bright and new as ever. Just then the tsar looked out of the window, and he saw the church and bridges.

"The old man's son is no ordinary man to have done what he has done," said he. "He has built a church and three bridges in the space of one night!"

The old man heard him and set out for his house again. He reached it soon enough, and the Burbot met him at the door.

"What have you seen, father?" asked he.

"A church and three bridges," the old man replied.

"Go back now and hear what the tsar has to say!" the Burbot ordered.

Away went the old man, and so happy and pleased was he that the ground under his feet seemed as soft as a rug to him.

He reached the tsar's house soon enough and came inside.

"What do you want?" the tsar asked him.

"My son the Burbot has sent me to hear what you have to say," replied the old man.

"Well, then, tell him this," said the tsar. "That I have a last task for him to do, and that is to bring me a sledge and three horses. If he brings them, he shall have my daughter in marriage even if everyone makes fun of her because of it; but if he doesn't, then I shall cut off both his head and yours!"

Away went the old man, weeping bitterly and fit to drop so faint was he with fright and sorrow.

He came home, and his son the Burbot met him at the door.

"Why are you crying, father?" asked he.

"How can I help it! The tsar will never let us have his daughter. I am an old man and you are only a burbot, and we cannot hope to do what he asks. He would have you bring him a sledge and three horses, and if you don't do it, he will cut off both your head and mine!"

"Have a sleep now, father," the Burbot said, "and early tomorrow morning go to the tsar's house and see what is to be seen."

The old man went to bed, and the Burbot crawled to the threshold, gave a jump and a leap, and turned into a youth. He

stuck his iron staff, top first, into the ground, and thirty armed men appeared.

"What do you wish, master?" asked they.

"Bring me a sledge and three horses!" the Burbot ordered.

"It shall be done!" cried the thirty armed men.

Away they went at a run, and the Burbot came into the house, gave a jump and a leap and got back his former shape. He went to bed, and early the next morning woke his father and said:

"Go to the tsar's house now, father, and see what is to be seen."

The old man set out for the tsar's house, and when he got there what did he see but a sledge and three horses standing by it under the windows. He got into the sledge and pretended to be fixing something there, and the tsar looked out of the window just then and saw him.

"The Burbot must be no ordinary man to have done what he has done!" said he.

The old man went home.

"The sledge and horses are waiting by the tsar's house!" said he to his son.

"Well, then, go back and hear what the tsar has to say, for I have carried out all the three tasks he set me."

Off went the old man, so pleased and happy that the ground under his feet felt as soft as a rug to him, and was soon back in the tsar's house again.

"What do you want?" the tsar asked.

"My son the Burbot has sent me," the old man replied. "He has carried out all the three tasks you set him, so now you must give your daughter to him in marriage."

"It shall be so, for so I promised," said the tsar. "I will not go back on my word even if all the townfolk make fun of me. Come, old man, bring your son here!"

The old man was overjoyed and ran all the way home.

"Well, am I to have the tsar's daughter or not?" the Burbot asked him.

"I have come to fetch you and bring you to the wedding feast," the old man replied.

He put the Burbot in the sack, and, throwing the sack over his shoulder, set out for the tsar's house. On he went, and the townsfolk, who had heard of the wedding, looked at him as he passed by and laughed, saying:

"The tsar must be mad to be marrying his daughter to a burbot."

But the old man walked on and paid them no heed.

He came to the tsar's house, and, taking the Burbot out of the sack, placed him on a stool.

The wedding feast began and it went on for a week, and whenever the wine was passed round the old man would pour some in the Burbot's mouth.

The Burbot and the tsar's daughter were driven to the new church where the marriage ceremony was held and then on to the new house. The feasting began anew, but as everything in this world has an end, it was over after a time, and the newlyweds were left alone at last.

For three years the Burbot lived in the new house with his wife, and he was a fish by day and a man by night.

One day Princess Marya got up early in the morning and lit the stove. She sat by it, very sad and sorrowful, and she said to herself:

"The townsfolk have been making fun of me all these three years. I think I shall burn my husband's clothes, and perhaps he will remain a man and never turn into a burbot again."

She threw the Burbot's clothes into the stove and burned them, but when she came into his bedchamber her husband was nowhere to be seen. She sat down by the window, and a little bird perched on it and said:

"You were patient for three years, Princess Marya, and you should have been so a little while longer. You burned your husband's clothes three days too soon, for he would have turned into a man at the end of them."

The little bird flew away just before sunrise, but Princess Marya sat on by the window as sad as ever. For a week she sorrowed, and she kept asking herself over and over again: "Where, oh where am I to find my husband the Burbot?"

A week passed, and Princess Marya left her house and went off

no one knew where in the wake of the bird. She came to the edge of the town, and an old woman, leaning out of the window of a house there, saw her and called:

"Where are you going, Princess Marya?"

"I have burned the clothes of my husband the Burbot, and I am off to seek him," Princess Marya replied.

Said the old woman:

"You'll never get to where he is dressed the way you are. Go back and have them forge you three pairs of iron boots, three iron hats and three loaves of iron bread. Only then go in search of him, and if you find him, well, then, you will, and a lucky woman you'll be."

Back went Princess Marya to her house. She bade them forge her three pairs of iron boots, three iron hats and three loaves of iron bread, and when these were ready, set out on her way again. She walked across the town to its edge and reached the old woman's house, and the old woman fed her and had her spend the night with her. And early the next morning, just as Princess Marya was about to leave, she said to her:

"Go to where there is a hole on the face of the earth, and when you come to its edge, put on a pair of iron boots and an iron hat, eat a loaf of iron bread and then climb down the hole into the cave. In that cave those that shout will be shouting, those that weep will be weeping, and those that sing will be singing. They will beg you to remain with them, but you must shut your ears to their pleas and walk on without stopping. But remember: if you don't get out of the cave then, you never will. By the time you reach the end of the cave you will have worn out all the three pairs of iron boots and all the three iron hats and eaten up all the three loaves of iron bread. My sister will be waiting for you outside, and she will show you the way further."

Off went Princess Marya, and whether she was long on the way or not nobody knows, but the path she was following ended suddenly, and she found herself by a hole in the ground. She put on the first of the three iron hats and the first of the three pairs of iron boots, and, nibbling at the first of the iron loaves, down she climbed into the hole. She found herself in a long underground

passage and made her way quickly along it. On either side those that shout were shouting, those that weep were weeping, and those that sing were singing, and they all called out to her and begged her to remain with them, but she went on and never stopped. Sharp bits of iron strewed the floor of the passage and pricked her feet, and her first pair of iron boots had to be replaced by a second pair and then a third; thick spikes of iron that hung from the ceiling struck her head, and her first iron hat had to be replaced by a second and then a third, and still she went on. She had eaten the first iron loaf and the second, and was nibbling at the third, but there seemed to be no end to the passage, and the voices that called to her from either side of it grew louder and more insistent. Her feet were sore and her head ached, and she kept saying to herself: "Why, oh why did I burn my husband's clothes? Why couldn't I have been patient for another three days as I had been for three whole years? I will die in this cave and never more see the light of day!"

But she forced herself to stagger on, and at last there showed ahead a tiny ray of light no bigger than a pin point. She knew now that the end of the cave was in sight, and though the blood streamed down her face and her feet left bloody tracks on the ground, dragged herself to it. She climbed out of the cave, dropped down by its edge and lay there for a week, and only then felt strong enough to move on. By and by, seeing a house ahead, she hurried toward it, and, coming inside, found herself face to face with Baba-Yaga, the old woman's sister.

"Ah, Princess Marya!" said Baba-Yaga. "Where are you going?"

"I burned the clothes of my husband the Burbot, and now I am here to seek for him," said Princess Marya. "I care not if I die if I do not find him, for I love him dearly!"

Said Baba-Yaga:

"Your husband the Burbot passed here ten years ago. He is married to another now, the daughter of the Fire King. Stay with me for a time, and by and by I will show you where to find him."

Princess Marya spent a week with Baba-Yaga, and at the end of it Baba-Yaga gave her a comb and said to her:

"Now is the time for you to go to seek your husband. There is a big garden that I will show you surrounding the house he lives in,

and at the end of it you will see a hummock. Sit down on the hummock and begin combing your hair with the comb I have given you. By and by three women will come, all looking alike and all dressed alike, and of these the middle one will be your husband's new wife. She will beg you to sell her the comb, and you will tell her that this you cannot do but that you will give her the comb if she does what you ask her to do in return. She will want to know what that is, and you will say: 'Let me spend the night with your husband the Burbot.' To that she will agree. But remember: you must not give her the comb till she takes you into her husband's bedchamber."

Princess Marya did as Baba-Yaga told her. She came into the garden, sat down on the hummock at its end and began combing her hair. By and by three women, all three looking alike and dressed alike, came up to her, and the middle one said:

"This is a big town, but never have I seen a comb like yours here. Do sell it to me!"

"I cannot do it, not, that is, unless you do something for me in return," Princess Marya replied.

"And what is that?" the woman asked.

"Let me spend the night in your husband's bedchamber."

"Very well, I don't mind. And now give me your comb."

"Not now. I'll give it to you as soon as you bring me there."

"Come with us, then!"

Princess Marya went with the women and soon found herself at the door of the Burbot's house.

"Wait here!" said the middle woman who, just as Baba-Yaga had said, was the Fire King's daughter and the Burbot's new wife.

She went inside, but was back again in a little while.

"You can come in now and spend the night in my husband's bedchamber," said she.

She led the way into the Burbot's bedchamber, and, taking the comb from Princess Marya, left the room and shut the door behind her.

Princess Marya walked up to the bed where the Burbot lay sleeping, but though she called his name again and again and cried

very, very hard she could not wake him. Morning came, there was the sound of the key turning in the lock, and the Burbot's new wife came in.

"You've spent the night here, and now you must go!" said she.

Off went Princess Marya back to Baba-Yaga's house as sad as sad could be. A whole week passed, but she could not get over her sorrow, and at the end of it the old woman gave her a ring and said:

"Put this ring on your finger, Princess Marya, and go and sit on the hummock again. By and by three women will come up to you, and the middle one will beg you to sell her the ring. Tell her that this you cannot do, not unless she does something for you in return. She will ask you what that is, and you will say: 'Let me spend the night with your husband the Burbot.' To that she will agree. But remember: do not give her the ring till she brings you to your husband's bedchamber. She will only fool you if you do."

Off went Princess Marya. She went to the end of the garden and sat down on a hummock there. By and by the three women came up to her, and the middle one begged her to sell her the ring.

"I cannot do it, not unless you do something for me in return," said Princess Marya.

"And what is that?" the woman asked.

"Let me spend the night in your husband's bedchamber."

"Very well!" the woman agreed. "And now give me the ring."

"Not now. You'll get it when you bring me there."

"Come along, then!"

Princess Marya went with the women and soon found herself at the door of the Burbot's house.

"Wait here!" said the middle woman.

She went inside, but was back again in a little while.

"You can come in now!" said she.

She led Princess Marya into the Burbot's bedchamber, took the ring from her, and then went away again, shutting the door behind her.

Princess Marya came up to the bed where the Burbot lay sleeping, but his new wife had given him a sleeping potion and he slept so soundly that, try hard as she would, she could not wake him!

Morning came, the door flew open, and in came the Burbot's new wife.

"You have spent the night here, and now you must go," said she.

So off went Princess Marya back to Baba-Yaga's house.

"Have you seen your husband the Burbot?" Baba-Yaga asked.

"Yes, but he seemed like one drunk and I could not wake him," Princess Marya replied.

"It's because his new wife gave him a sleeping potion. She's a sly one, she is," Baba-Yaga said.

Another week went by, and Princess Marya sorrowed and wept and could not stop.

Said Baba-Yaga:

"You must go again to try to see your husband, Princess Marya. Here is a kerchief for you, and one more beautiful cannot be found anywhere. This is the last time I'm helping you, mind. You know what to do. If you don't wake your husband this time you'll never see him again."

Off went Princess Marya. She came to the hummock at the end of the garden, sat down on it and tied the kerchief round her head. By and by the three selfsame women came up to her, and the middle one said:

"I have never seen so beautiful a kerchief! Do sell it to me."

"It is a magic kerchief, and I cannot sell it; but I can let you have it if you do something for me in return," said Princess Marya.

"And what is that?" the woman asked.

"Let me spend the night in your husband's bedchamber."

"Very well! And now give me the kerchief."

"Not now I won't. You'll get it when you bring me there."

"Come with us, then!"

Princess Marya went with the women and soon found herself at the door of the Burbot's house.

"Wait here!" said the middle woman.

She went inside, but was back again in a little while, and, taking the kerchief from Princess Marya, led her into the Burbot's bedchamber.

Princess Marya came up to the bed, but the Burbot had drunk of the sleeping potion again and try hard as she would she could not wake him. All night long she tried, but when morning came he was still asleep, and so grieved was she that she burst out crying. Just then the key turned in the lock, the door flew open, and in strode the Burbot's new wife.

"You've been here long enough. Off you go now!" said she.

But before the words were out of her mouth one of Princess Marya's tears fell on the Burbot's cheek and woke him.

"It's raining!" said he, opening his eyes. "A rain drop just fell on my face."

He looked round him, and, seeing Princess Marya, said:

"Wait, second wife, do not be in such haste! That woman there is my first and true wife."

The second wife stood there without uttering a word, and the Burbot turned to Princess Marya.

"You have come, Princess Marya, you are here with me, and I am glad!" said he.

He called in the townsfolk and regaled the elders with food and drink.

"Speak out, elders!" said he. "Speak out and tell me which of these two women I should take into my house. One of them risked her life in order to find me, but the other was ready to sell me for any trifle, be it a kerchief, a ring or a comb."

"Your true wife is the one who risked her life to find you, and it is her you must take into your house!" the elders said.

They feasted a while more, and then the Burbot said:

"It is time for us to be on our way, Princess Marya! As for you, my second wife, you must live here by yourself, and someone else must rule over this town in my place!"

And with these words he picked up an old rusty box, and he and Princess Marya left the house together.

"Close your eyes, Princess Marya!" said he.

Princess Marya closed her eyes, and all of a sudden what did she feel but a soft wind caressing her face.

"Now open your eyes, Princess Marya!" said he again.

She opened her eyes, and there were the two of them sitting in

the open field on a river bank, with a town spreading just ahead of them.

"Have you ever seen that town yonder?" the Burbot asked.

"I think so, but I'm not sure," Princess Marya replied.

"It is your own father's town."

He opened the box, and at once Princess Marya swooned away. She came to by and by and opened her eyes, and there were the two of them, her husband and herself, lying on a couch in a rich house. The house was filled with many lovely things, and there were herds of horses and cows outside, and the town lay beyond, stretching farther than the eye could reach.

The Burbot, who had been asleep, now woke up.

"It was because you set me three tasks to do before marrying me that you had to suffer so much later, Princess Marya," said he.

He led in his mother and father and they all began to feast and make merry. The Burbot became tsar of the realm, and he and Princess Marya and the two old people settled down there together and are living there still.

And that is the end of that.

Ekva-Pyris

A Mansi Fairy Tale



There was once a youth named Ekva-Pyris who lived with his grandmother and trapped wild animals for a living. But though he set the traps up regularly he rarely caught anything, and this disgusted him so that one day he said to his grandmother:

"Why don't we sow some wheat, grandmother?"

"Go ahead!" the grandmother replied.

Ekva-Pyris sowed some wheat, and by and by, when he came to take a look at it, saw to his joy that it had given off shoots! He came back home and he said to his grandmother:

"Our wheat has sprouted, grandmother, so we can look forward to a rich harvest."

But after a time, when he went to take another look at the wheat, Ekva-Pyris found that it had all of it been eaten up by someone! So off he ran home to tell his grandmother about it.

"Someone has eaten up all our wheat, grandmother!" he cried.

And as there seemed to be no other way out, back he went to the wheat field and set up a trap there. By and by he went there again to take a look at the trap, and lo!—a crane had been caught in it.

"This crane has eaten up all my wheat," said Ekva-Pyris. "I'm going to kill him!"

He picked up a stick, meaning to make good his threat, but the crane stopped him, saying:

"Do not kill me, Ekva-Pyris! You will gain nothing if you do. But if you spare me I will make you rich and happy."

"Where will I find you?" said Ekva-Pyris. "You'll fly away the moment I let you go!"

"No, I'll leave a trail for you to be able to follow me," the crane replied.

Ekva-Pyris let the crane go and went back to his grandmother.

"A crane got caught in the trap but I let him go," said he.

"What did you do that for?" the grandmother asked.

"He said he would make me rich and happy," Ekva-Pyris replied.

And off he went to seek the crane. He walked and he walked, and by and by came to a large house. He glanced inside and saw a man and a woman there. The man stretched out on some skins and the woman squatted nearby. They offered him mead to drink and walrus fat to eat, and when he had eaten and drunk his fill the man rose to his feet.

"You are Ekva-Pyris, are you not?" he asked.

"Yes, I am," Ekva-Pyris replied.

The man went into a corner of the house where his furs were stored, and, choosing a squirrel skin from among them, gave it to Ekva-Pyris.

"Go home now, Ekva-Pyris," said he. "I have nothing more for you. Give this gift of mine to your grandmother and let her put it away and keep it safe."

Ekva-Pyris did as the man told him. He went home and gave the squirrel skin to his grandmother, and as it was dark by then they went to bed.

It was morning when they woke, Ekva-Pyris stretched, and his arms and legs brushed against something fluffy and warm.

Ekva-Pyris rose, he looked, and lo! — not a nail was there on the walls but had sable and fox skins hanging from it.

He went outside, and what did he see but some workmen building him a new house and a storehouse too and sackfuls of grain and flour lying about nearby waiting to be stored in it.

A day passed and a second day, and the town elder, who was the strongest man of all who lived there, came to see Ekva-Pyris.

"Do help me out and give me some flour, Ekva-Pyris!" begged he.

Ekva-Pyris gave him the flour, and the elder went away and baked himself some bread, but when he had eaten it all came back again.

"Do sell me your squirrel skin, Ekva-Pyris!" he pleaded.

"All right, if you give me a good price for it," Ekva-Pyris replied.

"I will, don't worry!" the elder said.

They struck a bargain, and the squirrel skin changed hands then and there.

The day drew to a close, and Ekva-Pyris and his grandmother went to bed. It was morning when they woke, Ekva-Pyris stretched, and his arms felt cold and so did his legs. He looked, and lo!—all the furs that had kept him warm were gone.

He went outside, and his new house was gone too and so were all the workmen.

There was nothing for it, so Ekva-Pyris went to see the man who had given him the squirrel skin.

"What, back so soon!" the man exclaimed. "I gave you a fine squirrel skin for a gift. Whatever did you do with it?"

"I sold it," Ekva-Pyris replied.

The man went into the corner where he stored his furs, and, choosing an ermine skin from among them, gave it to Ekva-Pyris.

Ekva-Pyris went home and to bed and was soon fast asleep. It was morning when he woke, he stretched, and his arms and legs brushed against something fluffy and warm. He rose and looked about him, and not a nail was there on the walls but had sable and other skins hanging from it. He stepped outside, and lo!—there were the workmen at work again building him a new house and storehouse. He stood and watched them, and by and by he looked and saw the town elder coming towards him.

Straight up to Ekva-Pyris came the elder and he asked him for some flour, and when Ekva-Pyris gave it him, went home. But he ate it all up on the same day and was back again to see Ekva-Pyris on the next.

"Sell me your ermine skin, Ekva-Pyris!" he begged.

Ekva-Pyris sold him the ermine skin, and, when night came, went to bed. It was morning when he woke, he stretched, and his arms felt cold and so did his legs.

He rose and glanced about him, and what was his dismay when he saw that all the furs had vanished, there was mould on the walls, and the house looked more bleak and dingy than ever it had before. He went outside, and his new house was gone and so were all the workmen.

There was nothing for it, so Ekva-Pyris went to see the man who had given him the squirrel and ermine skins again.

"What brings you here?" the man asked.

"I have given everything to the town elder and am as poor as ever I was again," Ekva-Pyris replied.

This angered the man who, as you have guessed, was the crane in disguise, and he said:

"I made you rich and happy, but you hadn't the sense to hold on to what I gave you. There is nothing more I can do for you, so go home now!"

Ekva-Pyris was about to do so, but was stopped by the crane's friend who happened to be in the house with him and had heard everything.

"Wait, don't go yet!" said he.

And going into the corner of the house where the furs were stored, he brought out the claw of a glutton and gave it to Ekva-Pyris.

"Take this claw and leave us!" said he. "And when you get home go to see the town elder and beg him for some flour. When he asks you where he is to put it, bring out the claw and tell him to put it in that. He will say that the claw is much too small and offer you a sack for the flour, but this you must not take. Tell him that the little that will go into the claw will be more than enough for you. You will see for yourself that no matter how much flour is poured into it the claw will only be half full, and when the elder sees his storehouse emptying, he will be so alarmed that he will beg you to give him back the flour. But you must stay deaf to all his pleas and only agree to give it him in return for the squirrel and ermine skins he got from you. The moment he mentions them, pour all of the flour back into the storehouse, take the skins and go home."

Ekva-Pyris heard the man out carefully and decided to do as he

told him. He set out for the elder's house, and the elder's workmen saw him and called the elder.

"What brings you here?" the elder asked.

"I need some flour," said Ekva-Pyris.

"Very well, I'll give you some," said the elder. "Have you anything with you I can pour it into?"

Ekva-Pyris said that he had, and when they came into the storehouse where the flour was kept, brought out the glutton's claw.

"Do you mean to say that you only want as much flour as will go into the claw?" the elder asked. "Why, it won't be enough to feed a mouse. Better let me give you a sack."

"No, just fill the claw and it will be enough for me," said Ekva-Pyris.

The elder began pouring in the flour, but no matter how much he poured in he could not quite fill the claw. The storehouse was emptying fast now, and, seeing this, the elder was much alarmed.

"That's enough of that!" said he. "Why, at this rate my storehouse will soon be empty, and I'll be left without food. Take your squirrel and ermine skins, Ekva-Pyris, only give me back my flour!"

Ekva-Pyris poured the flour back into the storehouse, and the elder brought out the squirrel and ermine skins and returned them to him.

Ekva-Pyris went home to his grandmother, and as it was bedtime by then they went to bed and were soon fast asleep.

It was morning when they woke, Ekva-Pyris stretched, and his arms and legs brushed against something fluffy and warm. He rose and looked over the house, and lo!—not a nail was there on the walls but had sable and other costly skins hanging from it. He came outside, and already the workmen were busy at work there building him a new house and storehouse. The storehouse was soon ready, and when Ekva-Pyris came inside he saw that it was full of grain and flour and other good things.

And from that day on Ekva-Pyris has been rich and happy, and the cold winter days hold no threat for him.

The Youth and the Niokhi

An Enets Fairy Tale



There once lived a man and a woman who were little and puny, and they had one child, a boy, who was as little and puny as they. The boy had no friends and always played by himself. He would take a log and tie a pair of horns to it and pretend it was a deer or fashion himself a rabbit out of willow branches.

One day the boy said to his father:

"Make me a bow and two arrows, father, and I'll play with them."

"I don't know about that," the father replied. "An arrow flies far. You'll go in search of it and lose your way."

"I have eyes, haven't I!" the boy said. "I can always keep within sight of our tent."

"That's so. But no, let's wait a while, you're too young to own a bow and arrow of your own," the father said.

But the boy went on pleading with him, he pleaded every day for three days, and the father gave in at last and made him a bow and two arrows.

"Why do you keep the child indoors?" said the mother. "Let him play outside. You didn't make him a bow and two arrows for him to stay in the tent, did you!"

The boy took his bow and arrows outside and played with them there. He would place a stick upright and let fly an arrow, and he never once missed his target. He would go on like this from morning till night and only come back to the tent when it was time

to go to bed. With no friends to keep him company, what else could he do!

Now, the tent the three of them lived in stood on a river bank where grew many rose willows. One day, some years later, when the boy was a child no longer, he took his bow and arrows and went along the bank, setting up a target whenever he had a mind to, shooting at it and then walking on again. On and on he walked till he came to a high hill. He stopped near it and tried to think whether he had gone far from his tent or not, and when he looked up at the hill again, saw, sitting on top of it, a *niokhi*, a large bird that looked somewhat like an eagle. Bursting into tears, for he realised that he had lost his way and did not know where his tent was, the youth moved up closer to the spot where the bird was sitting.

"Stop crying and come up to me!" the *niokhi* said. "See? I can talk in a human voice."

The youth came up to the bird, and he now saw that it had a large head and huge wings.

"Have you a father, my lad?" the *niokhi* asked.

"Yes, I have," the boy replied.

"And a mother too?"

"Yes."

"Why have you come here, then?"

"I didn't mean to. I walked and I walked, and there you were! And when I saw you I was very frightened."

"Why should you be? You don't know me, do you?"

"No."

"Well, it's good that you are here, for you can be of help to me."

"What can I do?"

"You can help me mend one of my wings. I have broken it."

"But how am I to do it?"

"Just listen carefully. Your father is a blacksmith and knows how to forge metal. Bind my wing for me and then go and tell him to forge me a new one."

"All right, I'll do that," said the youth.

"And tell your father that if he mends my wing I will reward him

richly," the bird went on. "I fell in flight and broke my wing, and now I cannot leave this miserable spot."

The *niokhi* then told the youth where the way back to his tent lay and how he was to get there, and before he knew it he was home again.

"I have found a *niokhi*, a magic bird," said he to his father. "He wants you to forge him a new wing."

"I don't know how to do it," the father replied.

"Whether you do or not you must. The wing has to be ready in three days' time."

"I don't know how to forge wings, I tell you!" the father said.

"Yes you do!" the mother now put in. "You can forge anything. Not getting old, are you? Come, now, do as your son asks."

Three days passed, and on the fourth day the father said:

"You two go to bed now, and I shall forge the wing."

The mother and son went to bed, and the father set out for a clump of rose willows that grew some distance away from the tent. In a deep pit there he found some iron and he spent the night forging the *niokhi* a wing out of it.

He was back in the tent by morning, and, when the mother and son rose, said:

"Well, my son, take the wing. It is ready."

Off went the youth with the wing, and he found the *niokhi* waiting for him just where he had left him.

Said the *niokhi*:

"You are here, God be thanked! Have you brought the wing?"

"I have," the youth replied.

"Give it to me, and then stay here for six days and wait for me to bring you a gift for you to take back to your father in reward for what he has done for me."

With these words the *niokhi* soared to the sky, and so fast did he fly that he was soon out of sight.

The youth waited for him to return for five days, and when the sixth day came round, made for the spot where he had first seen him. What was his surprise when, instead of the *niokhi*, he found a woman there gazing down into the water.

"Come here, my lad!" the woman called.

The youth came up to her, and he saw that of the woman's two eyes one was an iron one and that she had an iron arm and an iron leg. He drew nearer, but where the woman had been rose a slender tree.

"I thought you were a real woman," said the youth. "I wish you wouldn't play these tricks on me. The *niokhi* promised to bring me something to reward my father for his labours, and now I don't know what to make of it all."

He drew nearer still, and lo!—there was no tree there any more but only a large black stone.

"I'm afraid," said the youth, "You're playing tricks again."

He took another step forward, and the selfsame woman reappeared, only this time she was a flesh and blood woman, with not an eye or a limb of iron.

"Come to me, my husband!" cried she. "I was sent here by my father the *niokhi* to be your wife. You gave him a new arm. If it were not for you our whole land would have perished. I am waiting for my deer—I have many deer and many sledges—but as they will be here only in the morning, you and I can go to bed and have a sleep."

"I do not like to show myself to you in my tunic of deer fur. It is old and torn, and you will not like it," the youth said.

"Do not be troubled, I care nothing for such things," said the woman.

They wrapped themselves in furs and made themselves comfortable for the night, but the youth could not sleep for thinking about his wife having had three shapes, one of stone, one of wood and one of iron, before she became a flesh and blood woman again.

It was only toward morning that he dozed away, and when he rose at last saw that the deer had arrived. There were twelve sledges in all, ten of them large ones and made for carrying loads, one, quite small, a woman's sledge, and another, somewhat bigger, a man's.

"That last one must be meant for me," thought the youth.

There were tent poles piled on one of the sledges, and the tents themselves rolled up on another. A puny doe and fifteen small

deer were harnessed to the sledge that held the tent poles, and fifteen unharnessed deer made up the rear of the train.

"I thought those weren't real deer, but now I see they are," the youth told himself.

"Well, let us be on our way!" said the youth's new wife. "We shall go to your father's old tent. That sledge yonder is for you, my father sent it."

The youth got into the sledge.

"I do not know how to get the deer to obey," said he.

But he managed this with his wife's help, and they started out together for his tent. They reached it soon enough, and when it was in sight the youth's wife bade him stop the sledges. They unharnessed the deer and let them wander around free, and they set up their own tent there and did not come near the youth's old one.

The youth looked, and lo!—the tent that had been his changed into three tents, the three tents vanished and gave way to leaping, roaring flames, and then the old tent reappeared again, standing where it had stood before.

"Go to your father now," the wife said, "but mind, do not stay in his tent too long."

The youth made for his father's tent, but when he came inside saw that his father and mother were both dead.

"We will leave your father's tent where it is and ourselves roam from place to place," the wife said when he had come back and told her about it.

Time passed, and the wife gave birth to a child and then to another and another. She had twenty-five children in all, girls all of them, and when they grew to womanhood they too married and had children of their own. Thus it happened that of that one woman, daughter of the *niokhi*, and her twenty-five daughters many different tribes came to be that multiplied and spread over the tundra.

The Daughter of the Sun

A Nganassan Fairy Tale



One day a man riding a sledge drawn by a speckled deer saw, sitting on a mound, another man, with his head uncovered and with nothing to show that he felt the cold.

"Where are you going?" asked the man on the mound when the man in the sledge had driven up closer to him.

"To fetch the Daughter of the Sun who is a choosy maid and not easy to please. The tsar wants to marry her and he sent me after her. But who are you? Why do you sit there with no hat on?"

"My name is See-All and I can see and hear all!"

Well, then, come along with me, I may need your help."

See-All climbed into the sledge, and the two of them rode on together. By and by they came to another mound, and sitting on it was a man with a bow and two arrows in his hands.

"Who are you?" they asked.

"My name is Archer, and so good am I with a bow and arrow that I can hit anything or anyone within sight."

"Well, then, why don't you come along with us? We are going after the Daughter of the Sun who is a choosy maid and not easy to please, so we may need your help."

Archer joined them, and the three of them rode on together. By and by they came to a plain and on the edge of it saw a man who kept rising a little now and then as if in fear and then dropping back again.

"Who are you?" asked they when they had driven up closer to him.

"Not so loud!" said the man in soft tones. "There's a doe and a calf in the plain yonder — see them? Now, my name is Quick-and-Agile, and I am amusing myself by trying to catch the doe by the leg. I would have done it long ago if it were not that my feet are bound. The tsar of this land has had them bound in order for me not to be over-quick, you see."

"Can that really be so? Show us how you do it!"

Quick-and-Agile stretched out his hand, and before the doe could spring away had caught her by the leg.

"You are quick indeed!" said the men in the sledge. "Why don't you come along with us? We are going after the Daughter of the Sun who is a choosy maid and not easy to please, and may have need of you."

"All right, I don't mind!"

So now there were four of them riding along together, and by and by they came to two snow-topped hills, and, sitting between them, saw a man with snow on the tip of his nose.

"Who are you?" asked they. "Why is there snow on your nose?"

"My name is Strong-and-Mighty, and as you can tell by my name, I am very, very strong. I need only touch these two hills with the tip of my nose and they will come crashing down."

"Can that really be so? Come, show us how you do it!"

Strong-and-Mighty turned his head right and then left, and no sooner did he touch the hills with his nose than they came crashing down, and there was nothing left of them but heaps of rubble and dust.

"Why don't you come along with us?" said the men in the sledge. "We are going after the Daughter of the Sun who is a choosy maid and hard to please, and may need your help."

"All right, I don't mind!"

So now there were five of them riding along together, and by and by they came to a high rock on whose summit, which was as thin as the tip of a pole, sat a man with no hat on and with snow on the top of his head.

"Now, that is a strange sight indeed!" said the men in the sledge.
"Who are you and why is there snow on your head?"

"My name is Blizzard Maker, and I need only shake my head, and at once a blizzard will start and banks of snow pile up."

Blizzard Maker shook his head, and at once the wind blew and a blizzard began that swept up snow into banks.

"Stop! Stop before you kill us!" the five men cried.

Blizzard Maker stopped shaking his head, and the blizzard died down.

"Why don't you come along with us?" said the five men. "We are going after the Daughter of the Sun, who is a choosy maid and hard to please, and may have need of you."

"All right, I don't mind!"

So now there were six of them riding along together, and by and by they came to a snowy plain, and in the centre of it, sitting by a round water hole, saw a man with his lips stretched out toward it.

"Who are you?" they asked.

"My name is Big Throat, and I can drink up all of the water in this hole at one gulp, yes, and swallow the two fishes swimming in it at the same time."

"Can that really be so? Come, let's see you do it!"

Big Throat put his lips to the water hole and gulped up all of the water together with the two fishes swimming in it.

"Why don't you come along with us?" said the six men. "We are going after the Daughter of the Sun, a choosy maid and not easy to please, so we may have need of you."

"All right, I don't mind!"

So now there were seven of them riding along together, and by and by they came to a house made of glass. They walked all around it, but all the doors were locked and they could not get in.

"This must be the house of the Daughter of the Sun," said they.
"Come, See-All, tell us who is inside."

See-All looked over the house.

"There is a maid in it," said he.

"Come, Archer, shoot at the door!" they cried.

Archer shot two arrows at the door, and lo!—the lock came down in pieces and the door flew open. The seven men came inside.

They found themselves in a chamber of glass and gold, and, seated there, saw a pretty maid with ornaments of copper on her robe and headpiece.

"Who are you and where do you come from, O men?" asked she.

"We are going after the Daughter of the Sun and would be thankful if you told us where she is to be found. She is very choosy and hard to please, we hear."

"I know where she is and will take you to her," the maid said. "Only I'll make some food and feed you first."

And with these words she left the house.

She was back again by and by with an armful of copper faggots, and then went out a second time and returned with an armful of iron cones. She made up a fire in the hearth, and so high did the tongues of flame leap and so dense was the smoke that nothing could be seen. And as for the maid herself, she vanished, and it was as if she had never been there at all. But from afar came her mocking voice:

"Oh, you poor things!" she cried. "Wanted to capture the Daughter of the Sun, did you!"

The flames blazed brighter, and the men's clothing caught fire.

"Shoot, Archer, shoot!" they called.

Archer let fly his arrows, but this only served to make the fire flame up still more.

"Snuff out the fire, Quick-and-Agile!"

Quick-and-Agile waved his hand, but the smoke grew thicker and the flames stronger.

"Start a snowstorm, Blizzard Maker!"

Blizzard Maker puffed out his cheeks and blew, and a snowstorm began that dispersed some of the smoke and quietened the flames.

"Quench the fire, Big Throat!"

Big Throat spat out all of the water he had been keeping in his mouth, and lo!—the fire was quenched.

But the door was locked, so they could not leave the house!

Archer let fly both of his arrows, but the lock stayed where it was and the arrows bounced off it, their tips bent. So then Strong-and-Mighty passed his nose over the wall, the house broke in two, and they all stepped outside.

"Come, See-All, tell us where the Daughter of the Sun is!" cried his friends.

"She is far away and laughing at us!" said See-All.

"Come, Quick-and-Agile, bring her here!"

Quick-and-Agile started off at a run and was soon out of sight.

"Come, See-All, where is Quick-and-Agile and what is he doing?"

He is where the Daughter of the Sun is, and he would have caught her had not his feet been bound.

Archer shot his arrows at the ropes that bound Quick-and-Agile's feet and cut them down.

"Come, See-All, what has become of Quick-and-Agile?" his friends cried.

"He nearly caught the Daughter of the Sun and just missed doing so because she crossed the lake and is now on its other shore."

They decided to send Big Throat after her then, but he begged off, saying that the way was far and his legs weren't strong enough. So the first man saddled one of his deer with a gold saddle and gave it to him, and Big Throat said nothing more but set out on his way. He reached the lake in time and drank up all of the water in it, and Quick-and-Agile caught the Daughter of the Sun.

The three of them returned to where the others were waiting, and then they all started off together on their journey back.

They came to Big Throat's house, and the first man said:

"Thank you for helping me, Big Throat. Stay here and be lord of the waters, and may the fish you catch multiply for your people to eat and enjoy."

Big Throat stayed there, and the rest rode on, not stopping till they reached Blizzard Maker's house.

"Thank you for helping me, Blizzard Maker," the first man said. "Stay here and be lord of the snows."

Blizzard Maker stayed there, and the rest rode on and only stopped when they came to the house of Strong-and-Mighty. "Thank you for helping me, Strong-and-Mighty," said the first man. "Stay here and be lord of the mountains. The beasts living here will serve you faithfully and you must make use of their labours for the good of us all."

Strong-and-Mighty stayed there, and the rest rode on and did not stop till they came to the house of Quick-and-Agile.

"Thank you for helping me, Quick-and-Agile," the first man said. "Stay here, be lord of the deer and feed men with deer meat."

Quick-and-Agile stayed there, and the rest rode on and did not stop till they came to Archer's house.

"Thank you for helping me, Archer. Stay here, be lord of the hunting grounds and help hunters to hunt for game."

Archer stayed there, and the rest rode on and did not stop till they came to See-All's house.

"Thank you for helping me, See-All," said the first man. "Stay here, be lord of the plains, have many children and pass on to them your keen eye and sharp ear."

See-All stayed there, and the first man and the Daughter of the Sun rode on. They came to his land and settled down there together, and ever since the sun has been shining brightly and its rays giving life to the whole of the earth.

Puchika-Churika

A Selkup Fairy Tale



One day Puchika-Churika was left all alone in his tent. His mother had gone to look over the fish traps and see if any pike had been caught, and his father and elder brother were out hunting black-cocks and grey-hens.

Puchika-Churika took his mother's knife and began carving figures on the poles that held up the tent. Just then who should come up to the tent but Old Man the Devil.

"Where is your mother, Puchika-Churika?" called he.

"She went to see if any pike have been caught in the fish traps."

"Ha! I'll go there and give her a fright."

"Don't you do it!" said Puchika-Churika. "My mother has a large axe, and she'll chop you in two with it: one half will soar to the sky and the other sink in the ground."

"Where is your father, Puchika-Churika?" the Devil called.

"Out hunting black-cocks."

"Ha! I'll go there and give him a fright."

"Don't you do it! My father has a big knife, and he'll cut you in two with it: one half will soar to the sky and the other sink in the ground."

"Where is your brother, Puchika-Churika?" called the Devil again.

"Out hunting grey-hens."

"Ha! I'll go there and give him a fright."

"Don't you do it! My brother has a knife as big as my father's and he'll cut you in two with it: one half will soar to the sky and the other sink in the ground."

Old Man the Devil came into the tent, and Puchika-Churika thrust his knife up his sleeve and hid himself under some skins in a corner of the tent.

Old Man the Devil saw a dipper lying near the hearth, and he struck it with all his might.

"Where has Puchika-Churika gone to, Dipper?" asked he.

"That I won't tell you," the dipper said. "For I am the first to taste of everything Puchika-Churika eats."

Old Man the Devil saw a cooking-pot hanging over the fire, and he struck it with all his might.

"Where has Puchika-Churika gone to, cooking-pot?" he roared.

"That I won't tell you," said the cooking-pot. "For I am the first to taste of everything Puchika-Churika eats."

Old Man the Devil went searching all over the floor, and he struck the poles.

"Where has Puchika-Churika gone to, poles?" roared he.

"We won't try to hide him from you, Devil," said the poles. "He carved up our backs with his knife today and hurt us badly. There he is in the corner, under the skins!"

"Oh, he is, is he!" Old Man the Devil cried, and he seized Puchika-Churika and swallowed him at one gulp. But Puchika-Churika had his knife with him, and he went at the Devil's stomach with it and cut him badly.

"Something is gnawing at my insides!" Old Man the Devil cried, dancing round in agony.

Puchika-Churika ripped open the Devil's stomach and rolled out of it, and the Devil rushed out of the tent and ran away.

Just then Puchika-Churika's mother came home.

"Come and help me, Puchika-Churika!" called she through the door. "I have brought many pike. Take them into the tent."

But Puchika-Churika called back:

"I can't do that, mother! Old Man the Devil came and swallowed me, and I'm a terrible sight because I sat in his stomach for so long."

By and by Puchika-Churika's father came home.

"Come and help me, Puchika-Churika!" he called. "Take the black-cocks I have brought into the tent!"

But Puchika-Churika called back:

"I can't do that, father! Old Man the Devil came and swallowed me, and I'm a terrible sight because I sat in his stomach for so long."

By and by Puchika-Churika's brother came home too.

"Come and help me, Puchika-Churika!" called he. "Take the grey-hens I have brought into the tent."

"I can't do that!" Puchika-Churika called back. "Old Man the Devil came and swallowed me, and I'm a terrible sight because I sat in his stomach for so long."

So then the mother, the father and the brother lighted their torches and came into the tent, and lo! — there sat Puchika-Churika as dirty and smudgy as could be. The mother set to and gave him a scrubbing, and that was the end of that.

The Mistress of Fire

A Selkup Fairy Tale



This was long ago when all Selkups lived on one camping ground in four tents.

One day the men went to the forest to hunt wild animals, and only the women and children were left in the tents. They stayed there for three days, and on the evening of the third day one of the women came out of her tent and chopped some firewood in order to be able to make a fire and cook some food. She brought the logs into the tent, threw them in the hearth, and, lighting a fire, sat down close to it with her baby son at her breast. The fire crackled merrily, and the mother warmed her son by it and was glad. All of a sudden a spark flew out of the hearth, fell on the child's breast and burnt him. The boy burst out crying, and the mother sprang up and began berating the fire.

"What are you doing, fire!" she cried. "I give you logs to eat, I feed you, and you burn my child. You'll have no more logs! I'll chop you up with an axe, pour water over you and put you out."

She thrust the baby in his crib, and, taking an axe, chopped away at the flames. Then, picking up a potful of water, she poured it over them.

"Just you try and burn my son now, fire!" said she. "I have put you out for good and all, and not a spark is left burning!"

The fire burned no more, and it was dark in the tent and so cold that the baby began wailing louder still.

The mother was frightened by what she had done and began trying to light the fire again. She tried very hard, she blew and she blew, but to no avail.

The baby cried on, and, thinking to get a light from her neighbours, the mother ran to their tent. But the moment she opened the door the fire in the neighbour's hearth went out. The women tried to light one, but not a spark was left burning, and there was nothing they could do. The mother rushed to the tent of another of her neighbours, but there too the same thing happened: the moment she opened the door the fire in the hearth went out. Not bothering to come inside, the mother shut the door and ran to a third tent. She opened the door only a crack, but the fire in the hearth went out at once just as it had in the first two tents. She hurried home then, but on the way saw a light coming from her grandmother's tent that stood some distance apart from the rest. She rushed there and pushed open the door, but the moment she was inside the fire began to sputter and smoke and then went out altogether.

"What's this? What's this?" the grandmother cried in chiding tones. "No sooner do you come in than the fire goes out. Now, why should it do that? You have hurt the feelings of the Mistress of Fire, that's what you have done, you silly frog you!"

The granddaughter began to cry. There was no fire anywhere in the camp, no one could light one, and it was dark and cold in the tents.

"Come, let us go to your tent, frog, for I want to see what you have done," the grandmother said.

They went there together, and it was colder than ever in the tent, and the baby was crying loudly and very nearly drowning in tears.

The grandmother took two pieces of wood and rubbed them against each other in an effort to start a fire, but though she tried very, very hard, nothing came of it. She dropped down on her knees and stared at the hearth, but it was very dark and at first she could see nothing. Then, gradually, she made out the faint outlines of a woman who seemed to be crouching there. All at once the

woman's skin, which was lined and creased, for the woman was quite old, grew rosy and bright and seemed to give off a glow as of fire. 129

Said the woman:

"Don't try to light a fire, for you won't succeed. Your granddaughter has wounded me gravely, and I cannot forgive her."

"What has she done, tell me?" the grandmother asked.

"She chopped at my head with an axe and flung water in my face. It was a very bad and silly thing to do, and I don't know why she did it."

The grandmother was very vexed with her granddaughter.

"I knew that young frog had done something she shouldn't have!" said she. "Please do not be angry, Mistress of Fire, and give us a light!"

The Mistress of Fire was silent, but the grandmother went on pleading with her, she pleaded for a long time, and at last the Mistress of Fire said:

"I will only let you have fire when that woman, your granddaughter, gives me her son. Out of his heart will I wring flame. Knowing this, she will treasure fire and never treat it so thoughtlessly."

At this the granddaughter's eyes filled with tears. She wept and wept and could not stop.

Said the grandmother:

"Because of you all the seven tribes of man are left without fire. How will they live? You must give up your son, granddaughter!"

There was nothing for it, and the granddaughter gave her son to the Mistress of Fire.

"Know, O Selkups, every man and woman of you, that you are never to touch fire with anything made of iron!" said the Mistress of Fire. "Only if you are in great need can you do it, and even then you must ask my permission first. Listen to me, all, and remember what I say!"

And she touched the logs with her fingers and set them alight. The flames leapt up and turned into a fiery whirlwind that swept to

the sky, the Mistress of Fire flew out of the tent and vanished, and the granddaughter's son vanished with her and was never seen again.

"A legend will be born out of this," said the grandmother to her granddaughter. "From mouth to mouth will it be passed that you lighted a fire with your own son's heart."

The Wooden Stick

A Nazai Fairy Tale



Whether far or near, I cannot say, but there once lived an old man whose only treasures were a sieve of bast, a silver dipper and a wooden stick for mixing dough. That was all he had to his name and he made the best of it.

One day the old man heard that a rich witch doctor was holding a wake in the neighbouring camp. He decided to go there and he took his sieve with him. Now, the sieve was no ordinary sieve. It was enough to put some sand in it or even some snow and to shake it for delicacies of all sorts to come pouring out of it.

The old man came to the witch doctor's house, and he hung his sieve on a pale in front of it before entering. He came inside, and the witch doctor's servants began regaling him with vodka, which, because of the berries put in it for the flavour, was pink. The old man sat there and drank and enjoyed himself, and the witch doctor came out into the yard and saw the sieve hanging from a pole. He lifted and shook it, and lo!—buns and cakes and pancakes began pouring out of it.

"This is a fine sieve indeed!" said the witch doctor, and he took it away and hid it.

By and by the old man decided that it was time to go home. He went outside and up to the paling, he looked, but his sieve was gone! He searched for it for a long time, but it was

nowhere to be seen, and, angry as this made him, he went home without it.

On the next day the old man set out for the witch doctor's house again, and this time he took his silver dipper along. Now, the dipper was no ordinary dipper either. One had only to tilt it, and wine would come pouring out of it.

The old man walked up to the witch doctor's house, he hung the dipper on a pole and came inside.

There he sat in the house drinking pink vodka, and the witch doctor came out into the yard and saw the dipper hanging from a pole. He lifted and tilted it, and lo!—what should come pouring out of it but wine. He drank it greedily but could not drink it all up, for no matter how much he drank the dipper was always full.

"I must have this dipper!" said the witch doctor to himself, and he put it away where it could not be found.

The old man came out of the house, he looked, but the dipper was gone! He searched for it for a long time but could not find it and went home empty-handed.

The third day came round, and the old man prepared to go to the witch doctor's house again. He looked in his shed, saw that he had nothing left but the stick, and, throwing it over his shoulder, set out on his way.

He left the stick lying by the paling and came inside, but no sooner did he seat himself beside the other guests and pick up a glassful of pink vodka than there came from the yard a great clatter and yelling and noise.

Everyone rushed outside, and what did they see but the old man's stick beating up the witch doctor all of itself.

"Oh! Oh! Please don't kill me!" the witch doctor cried.

But the stick went dancing over his back and beating him very hard indeed.

"Please don't kill me!" cried the witch doctor again. "I'll give up the sieve, I promise."

"I had a dipper too besides the sieve," the old man said.

The witch doctor rushed into the house and was soon out again, bringing the sieve and dipper.

"All right, stick, you can stop beating up the thief now, he's had enough," the old man said.

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And off he went home, taking his sieve, his dipper and his stick with him.

From that day on he kept to his house and never paid the witch doctor a visit again, and that's the end of that.

The Bonny Maid and the Frog

A Nansai Fairy Tale



There once lived near the Amur River a bonny maid and a frog, and they were both very poor.

One day Bonny Maid gave birth to a son, and Frog, to a daughter, and as there was nothing for them to eat, Frog said to Bonny Maid:

"Come, sister, let us go and pick some bird-cherry fruit."

"Where will we find bird-cherries?"

"There's no end of them growing on that island yonder."

So Bonny Maid and Frog put their children in a boat and set out for the island. Frog rowed and Bonny Maid steered, and by and by they reached the island.

They made fast the boat, and, leaving their children in it, went to the forest to pick the fruit. They were at it for some time when Bonny Maid said to Frog:

"Go and see if the children are all right, sister!"

Frog went down to the shore and up to the boat, took out her little daughter and flung her to the ground, and herself got into the boat and pushed off and away with Bonny Maid's child.

She came back home and settled down there with the boy, deciding to bring him up for her very own. .

Bonny Maid waited for Frog for a long time and she called to her again and again, but, of course, there was no reply. Alarmed, she went down to the shore, but found the boat gone and her son with it

and no one there at all but Frog's little daughter who lay crying on the ground.

There was nothing for it, so Bonny Maid built a house of grass on the river shore and settled down in it with Little Frog. But there was little for them to eat and they often went hungry. In summer it was easier, for then they lived on bird-cherry fruit and berries, some of which they dried and put away or made flat-cakes of.

The years passed, and Bonny Maid's son, who still lived with Frog, grew big and tall. He hunted wild animals, and he and Frog lived on the meat of these and wanted for nothing.

One day the boy was out hunting and he killed a large, fat moose. He had just finished skinning the animal and cutting up the carcass when he heard a bird calling to him and saying:

"Caw-caw-caw! Frog is not your true mother, my lad. Your true mother lives with Little Frog on that island yonder, and she goes hungry while you eat your fill. Caw-caw-caw!"

A stab of pain went through the boy's heart when he heard these words. He hid the moose he had killed and set out for home.

He walked and he walked, and there was the house at last with Frog inside waiting for him.

The boy sat down on the stove ledge.

"Please, mother, warm me some water," said he. "I do not feel well."

Frog put some water in a pot and hung it over a fire.

"The water must be warm now," said she by and by.

"No, wait, I want it boiling hot!" said the boy.

He waited till the water had boiled up and said:

"Hand me the pot now, mother!"

Frog took down the pot and brought it to him, and the boy at once seized her hands and thrust them in the water for the stripes to stand out more.

"Oh! Oh! It's hot!" cried Frog, and, turning aside, added: "Another's child, with a thief for a father!"

"What did you say, mother?" the boy asked.

"Nothing, my son, nothing. I was only telling myself that you need a new pair of fur boots, that's all."

"Why are your legs so crooked, mother?" asked the boy again.

"Well, you see, they turned that way in the old days when your father and I used to ride to market and I had to sit in the sledge with my legs folded under me for days on end."

"Why are there spots on your belly, mother?"

"I burnt myself sitting by the fire making your father's clothing for him, that's why!"

"Why is your face so yellow, mother?"

"I wore my large Chinese earrings when there was a frost out and froze it, that's why!"

"Why do your eyes bulge so, mother?"

"I never closed them but watched the dogs when your father and I rode to market, that's why!"

The boy said nothing, so Frog went and sat by the fire.

"Another's child, another's child!" she muttered.

"What did you say, mother?" the boy asked again.

"Nothing, my son. I was only telling myself not to forget to go for firewood and for water tomorrow morning."

On the following morning the boy rose early and set out in his boat for the Amur's opposite shore to seek the island. He found it soon enough, and, climbing out of the boat, went along the shore. By and by he came to a poor little house, the very same where lived Bonny Maid and Little Frog, and he saw the two of them there.

The boy threw Little Frog a piece of fat, and Little Frog picked it up, and, bringing it to Bonny Maid, said:

"Look, mother, meat!"

"I'm not your mother," said Bonny Maid. "Your mother lives on the Amur's opposite shore where there is plenty of meat and oil. And you only make a laughing-stock of yourself by calling a piece of fat meat. Why, you don't know the taste of either!" And glancing at the boy, she asked:

"Who is your mother, my lad?"

"My mother is a frog who lives on the river's opposite shore," the boy replied.

"What is your name, my lad?" Bonny Maid asked.

"Kaie."

"Kaie? Then you are my son!" Bonny Maid cried, tears of joy rolling down her cheeks. And, happy that she had her son with her again, she threw her arms round him. 137

"I'm going to drive Frog out of our house, mother!" the boy said.

And off he set in his boat for the river's opposite shore.

It did not take him long to get there or drive out Frog and he was soon back again to take his mother home.

"Why don't you drive out Little Frog, mother?" asked he.

"I can't do that!" Bonny Maid replied. "I suckled her at my own breast and I took great pains bringing her up properly."

They got in the boat, all three of them, crossed the Amur and settled down in their old house. The boy hunted wild animals, and Little Frog helped out Bonny Maid by going for water and firewood.

One moonlit night Little Frog took a pair of pails and went to the river. She dipped the pails in the water, brought them up brimming, and, slipping them on a yoke, carried the yoke up the shore. She was halfway home when she stopped for a rest. All of a sudden the moon shone out brighter, and the shadow of Little Frog with her yoke and pails fell on its surface.

"How I would have loved to be up on the moon!" said Little Frog to herself, and she sang out:

"The moon fell, the bright moon,
On the ground it lay, on the ground!"

Suddenly the moon stretched out and became as long as a ribbon. It lifted Little Frog high, yoke and all, and lo!—there she was up in the sky, on the moon's surface.

As for Bonny Maid and her son, they were in the house talking and knew nothing about it.

"Where is Little Frog?" asked Bonny Maid when some time had passed and she did not return. "Go and see what is keeping her, son."

The boy rose and went outside. He looked on the river shore and everywhere else he could think of, but he did not see Little Frog anywhere. All of a sudden he noticed that the moon had grown darker. He glanced up, and lo and behold!—

there was Little Frog with her yoke and pails on the moon's surface.

"Come and look, mother!" the boy cried. "Little Frog is on the moon!"

Bonny Maid ran out of the house, she looked, and she saw that her son had spoken truly, for Little Frog was indeed on the moon.

So now only the two of them were left in the house, and they lived there long and happily.

The Seven Brothers and Their Sister

An Orochi Fairy Tale



There once lived seven brothers and their sister. One day they were out playing by their tent, using sticks to knock down pegs stuck in the ground. They were much engrossed in the game when a squirrel came running up, begging to let her join them. This they did, and the game went on, but by and by one of the brothers accidentally hit the squirrel's hind paw with his stick. The squirrel stopped playing and left in a huff, threatening to come on the next day with her friends and wreak vengeance on all the seven brothers.

The brothers were frightened and began trying to think how to avoid the encounter. They could think of nothing at first, but at last the oldest of the brothers said that the only way to do it was for them to climb to the top of the sky and hide there. With this they all agreed, all but the youngest of them, who said:

"You are forgetting our sister, my brothers. It will be much too hard for her to climb so high, and if we leave her in the forest the squirrels might find her there and kill her."

They thought this over and decided to dig out a hole in the earthen floor under the hearth and put their sister in it. On her breast they placed a leather bag filled with the blood of a deer, and this they covered with earth, leaving a tiny opening over their sister's head for her to be able to breathe. After that, they each, one after another, shot their arrows skyward. The first brother's arrow pierced the sky and stuck there, the second brother's arrow

pierced the end of the first brother's arrow and stuck there, the third brother's arrow pierced the end of the second brother's arrow and stuck there, and so on till all seven had had their turn and their arrows formed a kind of pole that reached from earth to sky. Up this pole they now climbed to the top of the sky, the youngest brother, who made up the rear, pulling out the arrows after him as he climbed.

On the next day an armed band of squirrels arrived at the tent, but as they could not find the brothers, began asking the things that were in the tent about them. The cups and the spoons kept mum, but an old pair of fur boots belonging to the sister spoke up and told them where it was the brothers had gone and where the sister was hidden.

The squirrels struck at the earth under the hearth with their pikes, they pierced the bag filled with deer blood, and, seeing the blood on the tips of their pikes, decided that they had killed the sister. They smashed all the dishes in the tent, and back they went to their home in the forest.

The sister climbed out of her hiding-place, tore the fur boots to pieces and asked herself what she was to do now, all alone as she was. Fearing that the squirrels might return, she resolved to go in search of her brothers. She set out on her way, she walked and she walked, and after a time she came to a tent in which lived a frog.

Seeing the girl in all her finery, the frog at first pretended to be very kind and sweet, but then she turned on her guest, took away all her clothing and dressed herself in it.

Just then the frog's dog began barking, and the frog said to the girl:

"Two young Orochi men are coming this way, and when they see how richly I am dressed they will drive you out and one of them will take me to wife."

With these words she came out of the tent to meet the young men, and the girl, who was quite naked, took up a stick and began hitting herself over the head with it. All at once the stick slid apart, and the girl climbed into it and hid there. She had no sooner done so than the two young men came in. The older of

them sat down beside the frog, and the younger, near the stick in which the girl was hiding. The older brother and the frog were soon engaged in talk, but the younger brother took out his knife, and, for want of anything better to do, began whittling the stick. He was struck dumb with fright when he saw blood pouring from it, and, flinging down his knife and the stick as well, rushed out of the tent. Looking up and not seeing his younger brother, the older brother decided to go home, and, taking the frog with him, left the tent.

By and by the younger brother regained his senses, remembered his knife and made up his mind to go back for it. Up he came to the tent and glanced inside before entering. What was his surprise when he saw a young girl there, naked as the day she was born. His fears gone, he opened the door and seized the girl before she could hide in the stick again. But when she told him about her brothers and about the frog who had stripped her of all her clothes, he wrapped her in whatever came to hand and led her home to his father.

The older brother and the frog were already there, and the father now asked both the frog and the maid to tell him about their families.

The frog, who was as foolish as she was spiteful, began boasting of her brothers and said:

"Give me a pail, and I'll show them to you."

They gave her a pail, and she went with it to the river, scooped up some water with several frogs in it, and brought it back to show them. The father took one look, and he drove out the frog and then asked the girl to try and find her brothers. So the girl went to the forest, stood under a large birch-tree there and began calling to them.

The Enduri, the spirits of the sky, heard her and they told her seven brothers about her. The brothers were overjoyed. They came hurrying down from the sky, and then each of them brought their sister a fine gown and other pretty things to wear. The girl put on the gown brought by her younger brother, for she liked it best, and then she led all her seven brothers to the old man.

The old man saw them coming, he spread a piece of silk at the entrance to his tent for them to walk on, welcomed them warmly and treated them to the best he had of food and drink. The brothers told him that they lived in the home of the Enduri, in the sky, and begged him to be good to their sister, and, having spent three days with the old man, went away. And as for the sister, she married the old man's younger son and the two of them lived happily ever after.

The Orphan

A Chukchi Fairy Tale



In a certain village by the sea there once lived a hunter, and so strong and rich was he that he lorded it over all. His tent, which stood a little to the front of the others, was larger than any and, unlike them, new and whole, his canoe was big and made of skins, and his harpoons and sticks had iron tips to them. The villagers feared the hunter, for he made them hunt for him but gave them only a small share of what they brought in. Yet, so small were their boats and poor their harpoons, that had they refused they would have died of hunger. *

In winter the rich hunter and his helpmeets hunted for seals and Polar bears, and in summer they put out to sea in search of walrus or scoured the hills to find wild deer and mountain sheep.

One day, a boy, an orphan, came to the village. None knew who he was or where he had come from. He lived in the open, with the snow for a bed, and fed on the pieces of frozen meat that the villagers threw to the dogs. On very cold nights, in order not to freeze to death, he would get in among the dogs and sleep with them. All in all, he led a dog's life, and there were none that would offer him shelter under their roof.

One day, the orphan stood gazing at the rich hunter's tent when the hunter's daughter, who was a very beautiful girl, came out to feed the dogs. The dogs ran up to her, and so did the orphan, and she fed him as well as them.

The hunter's daughter came back into the tent, and she said to her father:

"I've just been out to feed the dogs, and there was a boy there with them. Let's take him in to live with us."

The father thought this over.

"All right," said he, "I don't mind. Go out and call him."

The daughter did so, and when the boy drew near, she bade him come inside.

The boy hesitated.

"Why should I do that!" said he. "I don't know what you want of me."

The girl took him by the hand and led him inside, and she gave him food and drink.

The boy stayed in the tent, but he wearied of it after a while and said to the girl:

"I want to go outside, I'm tired of sitting here!"

The rich hunter, who heard him speak but could not make out the words, asked his daughter what the boy wanted, and, learning what it was, said:

"Take out my old clothes and remake them for him. Then he'll have something to wear when he goes outside."

The girl did as he told her, and when the orphan was dressed, the rich hunter told him to get to work and stop loafing around.

From that day the boy began going out daily, and he did any work that came to hand, helping now one, now the other of their neighbours with their chores. In time, he became a fine workman, and when he grew to manhood, he and the rich hunter's daughter were married.

One day he said to his wife:

"I want to go out hunting with the others. Ask your father if I may do so."

This she did, and the rich hunter said:

"Let your husband hunt if he wishes, but never by himself. He must always hunt together with me and use my old harpoon."

To this the orphan agreed, and he now began going out regularly with his father-in-law.

They were far out at sea one day when the orphan saw a seal in the water. He fell behind his father-in-law, and, unnoticed by him, stayed there waiting for the seal to reappear. When, instead of the seal he had first seen, a much larger one emerged, the orphan killed him and brought him home. Hearing him call to her, his wife came out of the tent, and together they dragged the carcass inside.

From that day the orphan hunted alone, and he killed many seals in winter and wild deer and mountain sheep in summer. He had grown very strong by then and was a fast runner.

One day, returning from a hunt, he said to his wife:

"I have killed a large sheep in the hills and left it there. Go and tell the neighbours to help me bring it home tomorrow."

The wife did as he told her, and in the morning all the village men gathered by the rich hunter's tent. The orphan came out and joined them and together they made for the hills. What was their surprise when, reaching the place where he had been leading them, they found there not one but many dead sheep and learnt that he had killed them all. They had to go back to the hills several times before all the animals were brought in, and when at last this was done, the orphan divided the meat and the skins equally among all who had helped him, leaving for himself no bigger share than each of them had got.

From then on, every time the orphan returned from a hunt he would ask the others to help him bring the dead animals home and he would share out the meat and skins afterwards, just as he had the first time.

Now, the rich hunter did not like this at all. One day, when the orphan did not go out hunting but remained in the tent, he stayed there with him, busying himself with some of the little chores that needed to be done. However, he dropped them all without a word before long and began to dress. He tied the sleeves of his robe at the wrists with leather thongs and did the same with his pants just below the knees, for all the world as if he meant to run a race or flight someone, and then he seized his bow and shot an arrow at the orphan. But the orphan ducked, and the arrow hit the wall.

The rich hunter said nothing. He flung down his bow, and the orphan told himself that he must have angered him in some way.

But this was not the last of it, for the rich hunter hated his son-in-law and feared him. Once, when the orphan was out hunting, he ordered his men to dig a deep pit near his tent and to fill it with sharp bones that the orphan, who knew nothing about it, might fall into it and be killed.

In the evening, seeing him returning from the hunt, his neighbours called out a warning, but they were too far away, and the orphan could not make out what they were shouting. He walked on and fell straight into the pit, but by a stroke of good luck was unhurt and able to climb out again without any difficulty. Waiting in the tent for him were his wife and his father-in-law, but his father-in-law did not touch the orphan, for he feared to harm him in his daughter's presence.

However, no sooner did the orphan go out hunting again than his father-in-law ordered his men to dig a second pit near the tent, one even bigger and deeper than the first.

In the evening, when the orphan, the carcasses of two mountain sheep on his back, was returning to the village, he heard the villagers calling to him again. He stopped short on the very edge of the pit and was unharmed, but no longer could he doubt that his father-in-law meant to do him to death. He came into the tent, and, leaving the sheep with his wife, went back to the seashore, got into his boat and put out to sea.

On he sailed for two days, and he only stopped the boat on the third when he felt that he could fight sleep no longer. He slept for a long time, and, on waking, sailed on again.

It was midday when he reached a strange shore, with no sign of human habitation there. Coming out on to it, the orphan gathered some of the driftwood cast up by the sea and began building himself a hut. He worked all night, and the hut, which he covered with earth for warmth, was ready by the next day. Weary and spent, the orphan lay down in his new hut and went to sleep.

When he woke he heard strange sounds coming from the seashore and decided to see what they were. Coming out of his hut, he spied some dark shapes on the snow. He came up closer and saw a herd of large seals there. He killed several, skinned and carved the carcasses, and hung out the meat for it to dry in the sun.

And this he did from then on day after day, hunting sea animals and killing many.

One day toward noon, when the orphan was out on the seashore, he saw two boats at sea. They drew nearer, and there was a man in each and the two were talking to each other.

The orphan went back to his hut, but came out again presently and returned to the shore just in time to hear the newcomers say that they would take away with them whoever happened to be living there.

The orphan hurried back to his hut and waited for the men to approach. They did so after a time, though not without fear, and when they were quite close, the orphan called to them to come in and not be afraid.

"Who are you, man or evil spirit?" asked they.

"I am a man, and you need not fear me," he said again.

They came inside, and he said:

"I thought I was quite alone on this shore. I did not know anyone lived near here."

"Many do," the men said. "You can join us if you like."

This pleased the orphan greatly, and he said so, and the three of them made for the shore and got into their boats.

The orphan was very agile and strong, and his boat went faster than those of the other two, so that he was soon well ahead of them.

"Why do you go so slowly?" called he to his new friends.

"Because we can't go any faster," the men replied, smiling.

After a time the shore on which they lived loomed in the distance, and the men said to the orphan:

"You can go faster if you want and sail on ahead, and when you come to our village go to the biggest house there and wait for us."

The orphan rowed on very fast and soon reached the shore. A group of people waited for him there, and they all wanted to know where their two friends were.

"They will be here any time now," the orphan told them.

And he made for the biggest house in the village where the two men soon joined him.

There was little help for it, so the orphan made his home amid the Polar Bears, as the people there called themselves, and he never left the village again. He dressed himself in white furs as did the other hunters and he hunted seals and other sea animals with the rest.

Now, there was among them a man named Big Bear, who was big and tall and very strong, stronger than any of the others, but mean too and spiteful and feared by all.

One day Big Bear bade the orphan come to his house, and when the orphan did so he said to him:

"Come again tomorrow. We will measure our strength, and the stronger man will kill the weaker one."

"Very well," agreed the orphan.

Back he went to his house, and he found one of the village elders waiting for him there.

"What did Big Bear want of you?" the old man asked.

The orphan told him all about everything, and the old man said:

"Big Bear means to kill you, he kills all who come to our village. So if you want to remain alive, this is what you must do. Before going out to meet him tomorrow, put on my clothing, and don't take it off whatever you do. Big Bear will cut two holes in the ice, and each of you will dive down to the bottom of the sea and bring up a stone. He who brings up the bigger stone wins, but if it is you who is the winner, Big Bear will tie the head of a walrus to a stick and try to pierce you with it. Be quick and get out of his way and then snatch the stick out of his hands and go at him in your turn. If you are strong enough, you may well kill *him*, which will be a good thing, for Big Bear is always beating up our young men and has slain many, and then you can marry his widow and live happily ever after."

The old man had had his say, and he and the orphan went to bed. And in the morning the orphan put on the old man's clothing and set out for Big Bear's house.

Big Bear met him at the door and bade the orphan follow him. They came to the shore of the sea, and the orphan saw that two holes had been cut in the ice there.

"I will dive to the bottom of the sea first and bring up a stone," said Big Bear," and then you will do the same."

Big Bear dived in, he came up with a large stone, and, flinging it out on to the ice, climbed out after it.

After that it was the orphan's turn, and the stone he came up with being the larger of the two, he knew that he had won.

Then Big Bear ordered the men who stood there watching the contest to strap the head of a walrus to a stick, and, when this had been done, bade the orphan face him.

"If you are weak and unable to stop me," said he to the orphan, "you shall die. Do not run away but try to snatch the walrus head from me."

The orphan drew up to his full height and faced Big Bear, and Big Bear flourished the stick and came at him, trying to pierce his breast with the tusks. But the orphan caught the tusks in his hands and stopped him, and there was nothing Big Bear could do.

"Now it is your turn to face me and mine to try to kill you!" the orphan cried. "Let us see if you can stop me as I have stopped you."

Big Bear stood up before him, and the orphan waved the stick with the walrus head and struck him with it. The tusks pierced Big Bear's clothing and his breast, and he dropped down, dead.

Then the orphan went to Big Bear's house, married his widow and stayed there with her. His wife bore him two sons and two daughters, all four handsome and strong, and he went out hunting as he had before, brought in much meat and many skins and was always ready and willing to lend a helping hand to his neighbours.

The orphan became known far and wide for his goodness, and to this day tales are told about him and about the tribe of the Polar Bears.

Vytrytva

A Chukchi Fairy Tale



Once upon a time there lived a father and a mother who had an only son named Vytrytva. Now, Vytrytva means 'he who lies on his back', and if you want to learn why anyone should bear so strange a name, be patient and listen to this tale.

The family were poor and often went without food, but this did not stop Vytrytva from lying around most of the time.

One day his father said to him:

"How can you lie around like that when we go hungry? Get up now and go to hunt wild deer!"

But Vytrytva made no reply and stayed where he was.

The months and the years went by, and the father was beginning to get old and so was the mother, but as Vytrytva made no move to help them the father had to go out hunting with his bow and arrow as he had always done. He hunted rabbits and partridges and brought some down, and it was he who fed his son and not the other way round. But he kept scolding Vytrytva, saying to him:

"Shame on you! All you do is lie around all day. Never do you bring any food into the house!"

However, as Vytrytva would not reply to this, the father grew tired of scolding him and left him alone.

Time passed, and Vytrytva was a child no longer but a grown-up youth, and his parents noticed that when he woke in the morning he was always drenched with perspiration. But though they wondered why this was, they never asked Vytrytva about it.

"Why does he perspire so?" the father would ask. "It must be because he is so fat."

"Yes, you must be right," the mother would reply.

But as the days rolled by Vytrytva grew visibly thinner.

"Maybe he's sick," the father said.

"Maybe so," the mother agreed. "Why else would he lose so much weight?"

They began watching him closely and saw that he had indeed grown very thin, and in the morning was as wet with perspiration as ever. They did not know that he had been secretly going out at night in order to exercise and grow strong and hardy. He would go far away from the house, and, when he reached a tall mountain, the tallest in the neighbourhood, pick up some large stones and, with these in his hands, climb to its top. He would leave them there, and, the night being practically over by then, return home, lie down in his corner of the tent and pretend to be asleep. There was little time before morning for him to cool off, so it was not strange that he should still be wet with perspiration when his parents woke up. And this went on night after night, with Vytrytva, who was afraid that his father might hear him come in, making his bed as far away from him as possible.

One day Vytrytva's mother and father saw a group of warriors drawing near their tent. It was broad daylight, but, living as they did all by themselves, they were badly frightened.

"Who are those men?" said they. "What if they have come here to slay us?" And they called to their son: "Come, Vytrytva, hurry! If you can't help nobody can!"

"Why, what's the trouble?" Vytrytva asked.

"What's the trouble, he asks, doesn't even know in what terrible danger we are!" the parents replied.

"Call me when you see them getting really close!" said Vytrytva.

"But they *are* close!" said his parents. "What are you waiting for?"

"Can you see what kind of weapons they have?"

"Yes, yes! Make haste, Vytrytva! Aren't you going to try and do something?"

But Vytrytva made no reply, for he was busy throwing on some light clothing

"They're carrying lances, Vytrytva!" called his father. "I see them quite clearly."

By then the enemy warriors had indeed drawn up close and had all but reached the entrance to the tent.

"Ho there!" they called. "Who is master of this tent?"

"I am!" Vytrytva called back, and out he stepped from the tent, lance in hand.

Frightened at the sight of him marching out against them alone, the warriors scattered, and Vytrytva soared up into the air and struck at them from above with his lance, mowing them down one after another.

"Use your bows and arrows!" their chieftain cried. "Kill him!"

"We're trying to, but we don't seem to be able to hit him!" the warriors called back.

They sent a shower of arrows at Vytrytva, but he evaded them again and pierced many with his lance.

Most of Vytrytva's attackers were now lying about, dead, and the rest fled in terror.

"You were the ones to fall on me first, so why turn tail now!" Vytrytva cried.

"We've no more strength left!" they answered.

"No?"

And he lifted his bow and began sending arrow after arrow at the fleeing men and slaying them on the spot. Finally, the chieftain lay on the ground, dead, and all the warriors, too, all save one who ran home and told his people about everything that had taken place.

As for Vytrytva, he was very weary after the battle and fairly streamed with sweat, and his parents, who had witnessed it all, looked at him in wonder.

"How is it that he has become so strong?" his mother asked.

"Yes, that is a wonder indeed!" the father echoed. "And who was it that made that lance for him? He had none before, and here he is with one that is brand new and thick, too!"

They settled down, the three of them, to a quiet life in their tent, and the days passed peacefully, with no more foes venturing near. But every night, while his parents slept, Vytrytva would go out without their knowing anything about it and carry stones to the mountain top. And as time passed he grew stronger and stronger and thinner and thinner.

Then came a day when a force of enemy warriors, bigger by far than the first, appeared in the distance. Vytrytva's parents were frightened half out of their wits.

"Look at the numbers of them — why, they darken the horizon like a great storm-cloud!" they cried. "You'll never be able to cope with so many, Vytrytva, they'll kill you."

But Vytrytva just lay there in the tent and uttered not a word in reply.

"They'll kill us!" the parents cried again. "How can you lie there like that, Vytrytva?"

"When they come near enough for you to see their faces clearly, tell me," Vytrytva said.

"Oh, very well!"

The enemy force was drawing nearer now, and their yells and jeers were clearly heard.

"Yah-yah! Yo-yo!" cried they. "Beware, Vytrytva, for we shall kill you!"

And they uttered all sorts of strange sounds in order to frighten him.

Vytrytva quietly drew on his battle dress.

"They're very close, we can see their faces," he heard his parents say.

Vytrytva stepped out of the tent, and there, facing him, were great numbers of enemy warriors. They were tall and straight, all of them, dressed in fine clothing and armed with the best of weapons.

"Ah, there you are, Vytrytva!" cried they. "Now we can fight properly."

"That is all very well," said Vytrytva, "but, since you think nothing of attacking a man of peace, do so and come at me first!"

At this, they fell on him like a great herd of wild animals, but Vytrytva defended himself fiercely and they could not overcome him. The battle, which was fought with lances, lasted for ten days and ten nights, and as the days went by the enemy ranks thinned. On the eighth day few enemy warriors were left alive, and on the ninth, only one, the strongest and most agile of them. He and Vytrytva met in single combat and grappled together, but for a time neither took the upper hand. Then the enemy warrior, who was of thick build and fat, began to lose ground. And as the battle reached its peak, Vytrytva struck the lance from his hand and sent it rolling over the ground.

"You have got the best of me, Vytrytva!" cried the enemy warrior. "I have no more strength left to fight you but must await death at your hands. Remember this: after you have pierced me with your lance, be sure to pull it out again. For if you don't, not only will you not gain in strength but have less and less as time goes by."

"Why is that?" Vytrytva asked.

"I don't know, but it's true nevertheless. Come, Vytrytva, it is time, take your lance and kill me!"

The warrior lay down on his back and closed his eyes, and Vytrytva pierced him with his lance. The lance stuck in the man's body, and, try as he would, Vytrytva could not pull it out for nine whole days and was only able to do it on the tenth.

After that Vytrytva went home where his parents were waiting for him, and life went on as before. He would go out every night and climb a mountain, and when his parents saw him in the morning he was soaked with perspiration. And yet a change had come over Vytrytva, for he was more tense and troubled now than ever before.

"I am full of unease when I get up in the morning," said he to his parents one day.

"Why is that?" they asked him.

"I don't know." And he added: "I only know that you must not touch me when you wake me in the morning. For if you do, things may go badly with you."

Summer came, and a hot summer it was, and one day Vytrytva's father, seeing Vytrytva lying asleep in the tent, thought he would wake him. But he forgot Vytrytva's warning and touched him lightly. Vytrytva leapt up, and, screaming with pain, flung out of the tent.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! You don't know how you have hurt me!" he cried. "I told you not to touch me when you woke me."

"We forgot," said his parents. "How are we to wake you, then?"
"By striking me lightly on the head."

Life went on as before, and one day, the father, returning from a walk in the tundra, said to his son:

"Mind that you don't go to the lake shore, Vytrytva. Things will go badly with you if you do."

"I don't believe it," Vytrytva said. "Nothing will happen to me, nothing, that is, unless a witch doctor casts a spell over me."

Now, Vytrytva was a hot-tempered youth who hated to be told what to do, so he set out for the tundra on the very next day. Feeling tired after a while, he lay down for a rest on the lake shore and was soon fast asleep.

As he slept, a man, a stranger, crept up to him and gave him a great push. Then, pulling out his lance, he made to pierce him through. But Vytrytva was quicker than he. Before the man could touch him, he leapt aside and took to his heels, out of the man's reach. When at last he stopped and looked round him, the man was nowhere in sight, but there, close beside him, stood the lake spirit.

"Why did you fall asleep on the shore?" asked he. "Didn't your father warn you not to do it?"

"He did."

"Why didn't you heed the warning, then? No one is allowed to sleep here."

"That's what *you* say! The land doesn't belong to you. Everyone has a right to it."

"Have they now? You will have to fight me and prove it!"

And the lake spirit threw himself at Vytrytva. They crossed lances and began to fight, and they fought for five whole days. Vytrytva was strong and agile, and so was the lake spirit, and, though the sun was out and the heat overpowering, they did not

stop but soared up to the sky and battled there with a fury that never waned.

Vytrytva's parents had no suspicion of what was going on when all of a sudden they saw a shadow come over the sun.

"What's that?" they cried.

The shadow moved nearer and took on the form of a man who seemed to be rushing about overhead. But who he was they could not tell, and, of course, they never guessed that it was their own son. They took it to be some unknown spirit, and every time Vytrytva passed over them with a whistle and a howl like that of the wind, shouted in fear and wonder: "Oh-oh-oh!"

On the fourth day the two combatants began to descend to earth, and on the fifth, though their duel went on, it suddenly grew dark, for they were on its surface at last. Vytrytva struck at the lake spirit's lance and sent it flying, and with his own lance he pierced his enemy through. And so great was his wrath that he never even gave him a chance to utter a word before he died.

The lance stuck in the spirit's body, and, though Vytrytva tried again and again, he could not pull it out for many months.

Only when winter arrived was he able to do it, and so hot and exhausted did he feel as a result that he lay down to cool himself. But even this did not help, and he had to plunge into the snow again and again before he was cool enough to put on his clothes.

After that back he went home to his parents, and the three of them lived together in peace and were never troubled by foes any more.

The One-Eyed Man and the Woman Who Turned into a Fox

An Aleutian Fairy Tale



There once lived a man and a wife. The man had only one eye, but the wife did not know it, for he only spent the nights in the house with her, going off somewhere at the break of day and not coming back till evening. The wife, who had no idea where he went or why, decided to find out.

One morning, when he went out as usual, she followed him and never stopped till he did. She then came up close to him, and, seeing for the first time that he had only one eye, told herself that she could not live with a man so ugly. She decided to leave him, and as soon as day set in, started on her way.

On and on she walked, and all of a sudden, coming toward her, she saw a giant. The giant wasted no words. Reaching her side in two strides, he caught her up, threw her over his back and carried her off with him. He came to a mountain and began climbing it, and he only stopped when he reached its top. There was an earthen hut there, with only its roof showing and the rest of it sunk in the ground, and the giant threw the woman into the entranceway and left her there.

By and by the woman regained her senses, and, when she saw where she was, began to cry. She had no clothes on and was very cold, and she was very sorry that she had left her husband for no better reason than that he had only one eye.

Suddenly she heard a voice, saying to her:

"Stop your crying, woman! There are crow feathers hanging just above you. Take them and put them on if you are cold."

The woman glanced up but did not see anything at first, and it was only after she had made a thorough search that she saw, hanging above her head, a basket made of grass. In this she found a tunic and a cloak of crow feathers, but as they were too small for her, could not fit them on, hard as she tried. She began to cry again, but the same voice stopped her, saying:

"Enough! No more tears, woman. There is a grass basket hanging over your head, and you will find animal skins in it. Take them and put them on if you are cold."

The woman looked up and saw the basket, and in it she found several fox skins which had been cut and dried and were ready for wear. These she pulled round her shoulders, felt warmer at once and began looking for a way out of the hut. She found it soon enough and at once set out for home.

On the way she felt thirsty, and, coming to a river, stopped for a drink. She bent down over the water and saw, reflected in it, her own face and head but with the ears of a fox instead of her own. The woman went on, and as she walked she had the feeling that someone was following her. Turning her head, she saw that she now had a tail like that of a fox and that it was trailing behind her. She tried to tear it off, but could not and had to leave it where it was.

She walked on and soon came to the place where her father usually hunted seals. Down to the very shore she went, and she stood there watching him hunt. By and by he stopped and paddled towards shore, and, when he saw a fox there, made fast his boat as near to her as possible. The fox seemed unafraid of him, but she sprang away at his first attempt to seize her. He threw her some meat then and watched her eat it, and then he turned his back on her and made for his village. The fox followed him with her eyes, and, when he was almost out of sight, ran after him.

The day was nearly done when the woman who was now a fox came to her father's house. She tried to steal inside, time and again she tried, but all to no avail, for her head seemed always to be in her way. She knew then that there was nothing to be done, so off she ran to the fields, and there she stayed for the rest of her days.

The Three Daughters-in-Law

A Khanti Fairy Tale



In a village called Malaya Sosva, where all were hunters, there lived an old man and an old woman. They had one son, and when he grew up he began to go out hunting too, like the rest.

One day, when they had just sat down to dinner, the old woman said to her husband:

"You and I are not growing any younger, old man. Our son has reached manhood, he hunts in the forest and at sea, and it is time to find him a wife."

"There are no lasses here that are good enough for him," said the old man. "You yourself know that we live close to a road where people are always passing and that some of them stop at our place. Now, a good visitor deserves a good welcome, so we need a daughter-in-law who can get up a tasty meal and prepare enough drinks for all. Here is what I think: there is a merchant living in Sherkali, and it is his daughter our son should marry."

"Yes, I believe you are right," the old woman said.

They wasted no more words but went to Sherkali, and the merchant having given his consent, brought back his daughter with them, married her to their son and settled down to a life of ease.

The merchant's daughter cooked the meals and prepared the drinks, and so it went on, but one day after dinner, and whether a long time had passed by or a short, nobody knows, the old man said to his daughter-in-law:

"Come, my dear daughter-in-law, make me a wooden cooking-pot."

"A wooden cooking-pot? Now, what can the old man mean?" the daughter-in-law asked herself. She thought and thought but could think of nothing.

The old man sat there, and he said again after a time:

"Come, my dear daughter-in-law, haven't you heard me? I told you to make me a wooden cooking-pot."

"But I don't know what you mean or how I am to go about making one," the daughter-in-law replied.

The old man jumped to his feet in a temper.

"I don't want a daughter-in-law who has so little sense!" he cried.

He drove out the merchant's daughter, and the three of them, he, his wife and his son, now began living in the house alone, as they had before.

Whether a long time passed by or a short, nobody knows, but one day they sat down to dinner, and the old woman said:

"You and I will be quite old soon, old man, and it isn't right for our son to be living alone like this, we must find him a wife."

"Yes, but he only wants the best, doesn't he!" said the old man. "The merchant's daughter was no great find, for she could not get on with us, so we must get a boyar's daughter to marry him."

So off they went matchmaking again to Sherkali, and they brought their son back a boyar's daughter for a wife.

They settled down together, the four of them, and the boyar's daughter cooked their meals for them and prepared their drinks.

Whether a long time passed by or a short, nobody knows, but one day after dinner the old man said:

"Come, my dear daughter-in-law, make me a wooden cooking-pot!"

But the boyar's daughter was at a loss how to go about doing this, and she just sat there and thought and thought.

The old man waited a while, and then he said:

"Come, my dear daughter-in-law, didn't you hear me? I told you in good clear Khanti to make me a wooden cooking-pot."

"But I have no idea how to go about it," the girl said.

"I don't want a daughter-in-law who has so little sense!" the old man cried, and he drove out the boyar's daughter.

Whether a long time passed by or a short, nobody knows, but one day the old woman said to her husband:

"Well, old man, how long will our son be without a wife? What will he do all by himself when you and I are gone?"

Said the old man:

"Ah, now, old woman, say what you will, but I know of no maid in these parts good enough for our son. The merchant's daughter did not make him a good wife, and neither did the boyar's daughter."

"It was never any use seeking out rich brides for him, if you ask me!" said the old woman. "Or to go so far to seek them. I know of a girl, an orphan, who will do very nicely and who lives close to the shore here, at the top of the road leading to the hunting lodge."

"Do as you think best," said the old man.

"It all depends on the young people themselves," the old woman began again. "They'll have a good enough life together if they make up their minds that that is what they want."

They talked it over some more, and then they called their son.

"We want to find you a new wife, my son," the mother said. "We think someone from our own parts might be the best choice. Have you anything against marrying the orphan who lives at the top of the road leading to the hunting lodge?"

"You know better than I what sort of girl you can get on with," the son replied.

So off the mother went to speak to the orphan, and the girl having given her consent, the two young people were married soon after.

When the wedding feast was over and the guests had gone home, they settled down in the house, and the orphan cooked the meals and made the drinks.

Whether a long time passed by or a short, nobody knows, but one day after dinner the old man sat down on the plank-bed and said:

"Come, my dear daughter-in-law, make me a wooden cooking-pot."

The orphan at once jumped up. She brought out a tobacco pouch and a pipe from under a cushion, filled and lighted the pipe and gave it to the old man.

The old man smoked in silence, and when he had finished his pipe, said:

"May you always be so quick, my dear daughter-in-law, and so wise too, and may you and your husband always have a full house and enough to eat and to drink on the table."

They lived on like that, the four of them, and whether a long time passed by or a short, nobody knows, but autumn arrived at last and with it the hunting season.

"It is time for us to get our hunting gear ready, my son," said the old man.

They set to work, and it took them a week or perhaps more before at last they were ready and could start on their way. They loaded the sledge and dragged it into the forest and in due time reached a hunting lodge that stood in the thick of it. They made their home in it and went hunting daily, bringing back game of all kinds in abundance.

One day they were out hunting far away from the lodge, and the old man felt very tired and could hardly drag his feet.

"Come, my son, make the long road short," said he. "Tired as we are, how will we ever get back to the lodge otherwise?"

The son could not understand what his father meant. He thought and thought but could think of nothing, and walked on in silence with hanging head.

"I wish I knew what my father wants," he told himself. "He might punish me for being so slow-witted."

"Don't you hear me, my son?" the old man began again. "I told you in good clear Khanti to make the long road short!"

"But I have no idea how to go about it!" the son said.

This made the old man very angry, and he went at his son with his staff and struck him again and again.

"You bad so-and-so!" he cried. "You stupid so-and-so! You must not be so slow-witted or you are in danger of perishing before your time. A hunter's life is never a very easy one."

And muttering angrily to himself, the old man hurried on. The

son followed him, wincing in pain, for his body ached from the thrashing he had got at his father's hands.

Whether a long time passed by or a short, nobody knows, but autumn passed, and the father and son left the forest and started homeward.

They reached their house soon enough, and they lay down and rested after the long days and weeks in the forest.

"When we were out hunting, my father was at me all the time to make the long road short," said the son to his wife, "and he gave me a beating for not knowing how to go about it."

"It is a pity that you who were born a man should not know such a trifle," the wife returned. "What your father meant was for you to sing a song in order that a long way might seem short."

Whether a long time passed by or a short, nobody knows, but another autumn came round, and the father and son prepared to set out for the forest again. They got ready their hunting gear, loaded the sledge and started on their way. They reached the hunting lodge soon enough and made their home there, and they went hunting daily and brought back game of all kinds in abundance.

One day they were out hunting a good distance away from the lodge, and in the evening, when it was time to return, the old man was so tired that he could barely drag his feet.

"Come, my son, make the long road short!" said he.

The son began to sing. He would sing a short song and start on a long one, and then sing a short one again. What with the singing and the joking, the father and son did not notice how they came back to the lodge, and they felt neither weariness nor hunger. They set themselves out a meal, and as they were eating the father said:

"That is the way to live, my son. When dark thoughts come to you, your step falters and your sight dims, and you do not know what path to follow. But sing a song, a gay song especially, and your spirits will lift, and you won't notice how the time has passed or how you have done whatever it is you set out to do. Remember this: a good hunter always cheers himself with a song."

164 "That I will, father," said the son. "You know who was the first to tell me this? No other than my own dear wife."

"Ah, it is a good wife we chose for you, my son," said the old man. "For she is wise and a good helpmeet to you. Now your mother and I can be at peace, for we will not be leaving our son all alone when the time comes for us to die."

And he sang a little song so pleased was he.

Niraidak

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An Evenk Fairy Tale



Long, long ago, when the earth had only just been created and the blue sky was being put up over it, in a place where met the longest rivers, there stood on a small island a tent fashioned of eight twigs of rose willow and three squirrel skins. In that tent lived a man named Niraidak who was so tiny that he wore a coat made of two sable skins, a hat made of a mole skin, and mittens made of the skin of a mouse each.

Niraidak had a knife of deer bone, he had a small, hornless deer on whose back he rode as on that of a horse, and he had nothing and no one besides, neither mother nor father, sister nor brother. He was quite alone in the world and lived by hunting wild animals and catching fish. A squirrel was to him as big as a fox is to an ordinary man, a doe as big as a moose, and the tiniest bird as big as an eagle, and if he killed any one of them he felt very pleased with himself and as proud as proud can be.

Time went on, and as there was no one he could compare himself to, he began to think that he was the strongest being on earth.

One day Niraidak decided to go travelling in order to see for himself how different people lived, to measure his strength with that of a giant, and to find himself a wife besides, and none would do for him but the most beautiful woman in the world.

He called his saddle-deer and he whispered in his ear: "Come, my saddle-deer, my only friend, turn into a fire-breathing boar, fly high over the ground, and carry me to a land where live the strongest of giants and the most beautiful of women!"

The deer at once turned into a fire-breathing boar, Niraidak got on his back, and away they rode!

They were long on the way, and whenever they came across anyone, the fire-breathing boar would pierce them through with his razor-sharp tusks or trample them with his hoofs. But Niraidak never turned a hair. He looked to all sides of him as he rode, and, being a cheerful lad, sang a merry song.

By and by they reached a large gorge, and there, standing some distance away from him, Niraidak saw a giant named Dioloni or Man of Stone.

Niraidak got off his deer, for by then the boar had turned back into a deer again, tied him to a bush, and, taking out his knife of deer bone, made straight for Dioloni.

"I will either slay or cripple him!" said he to himself.

He crept up to the giant from the back and was quite close to him when he tripped on a twig and fell, hitting his nose against Dioloni's foot.

Dioloni spun round.

"Who are you and where did you drop from?" roared he, and added in gentler tones: "Aren't you tiny, though!"

And picking up Niraidak, he placed him on his palm.

"My name is Niraidak, and I have no fear of you, Dioloni the Giant!" said Niraidak. "Beware! For I am going to kill you!"

Flourishing his knife of deer bone, he jumped on to Dioloni's chest, and, thinking to frighten the giant, began screaming and shouting at the top of his voice.

Dioloni burst out laughing, and, in order not to hurt the tiny little man, picked him up with his two fingers and thrust him in his bosom. Niraidak was taken aback at this and fell silent, but he was not frightened. He crept into the giant's sleeve, crawled down his wrist and sprang to the ground. In two leaps he reached his saddle-deer, his one faithful friend, and, jumping on his back, was off at a gallop! They rounded the mountain, and it was then that he turned back to shout:

"Take care, Dioloni the Giant! The next time I come I'll skin you alive and trample you to dust!"

On they rode, and it was not long before they reached a place

where lived the most beautiful of women. Niraidak lined them up in a row, stood gazing at them admiringly for a time, and, choosing the one he thought the prettiest of all, put her in front of him on the deer's back and set off homeward at a gallop. They were there soon enough, and Niraidak unsaddled his deer, his one faithful friend, and let him graze in freedom. He was about to lead his new wife into the tent when he saw that this would not do, for the tent, made as it was of eight twigs of rose willow and three squirrel skins, was much too small. So he set about building a new tent, and when this was ready he looked it over and told himself that it was as big and spacious as the sky!

Leaving his wife in the tent, Niraidak set out for the river to fish. Twenty-five tiny fishes he caught and he stuck them all on a twig, but when he tried to lift the twig he could not, so heavy was it. There was nothing for it, so back he went to the tent to fetch his wife.

"I have caught so many fish, wife, that you will have to help me bring them home," said he. "I cannot do it alone."

The wife was overjoyed and fairly flew to the river.

"Where are the fish?" asked she.

"Don't you see them?" Niraidak asked, surprised. "There's the hill, there the trees, and there the fish!"

The wife glanced at the tiny little fishes and stamped her foot in anger. She picked up the twig with one hand, carried it back to the tent, and cooked the fish, but, though she ate them all, she was as hungry as ever. And Niraidak told her to lie down, placed a stone on her belly that she might not ask him for more food, and himself went off to the forest.

There lay the wife and she said to herself:

"What good is a husband like that to me! I'll be left without food or clothing if I remain with him."

And off she went to seek a place where lived strong, handsome and thoughtful men who did not grudge their wives anything they might ask for.

And as for Niraidak, he lives all by himself now and is still wifeless, but he is as gay and full of high spirits as ever he was before.

The Grateful Eagle

An Evenk Fairy Tale



There once lived a mouse and a bird who decided to move in together for the winter. They dug out a little hole to keep warm in and their supplies safely stored, and, once it was ready, began bringing there, one by one, all the grains they could find in order to have enough to eat during the cold winter months. When the hole was full, with only room enough for the two of them to squeeze in, they agreed that they would not touch the food till winter.

"We will come here with the first snowfall," said the mouse to the bird.

The bird flew away, and the mouse scuttled off after her, but very soon after she began digging another hole, and when it was ready, took there all the grains and bits of bread she and the bird had stored together. Then she climbed into the hole and began gorging herself on the food, thinking the while:

"With only me to eat it all, I will want for nothing, for there's enough here to last me the whole winter through."

The first snow fell, and the bird came flying to the hole she and the mouse had dug. She climbed into it and saw that it was quite empty, with no food there, and no mouse, either. So hurt was she that she burst into tears, but she dried them soon enough and flew to a farmyard belonging to a Russian family. Some wheat was stacked in the yard, and she pecked at it and then flew up on to the

fence and perched there. By and by the mouse came running, and, remembering the treatment she had got at her hands, the bird flew at her and pecked out one of her eyes. 169

Half-blinded and feeling that she had been ill-used, the mouse filed a complaint and took the case to court.

The hearing, which was attended by all the animals and all the birds, was held in a forest glade, and it was there that the mouse and bird were summoned.

The eagle was senior among the birds, and the lion, among the animals, and they now faced each other, the eagle speaking in defence of the bird, and the lion, of the mouse. They were soon deep in argument, and so angry did the lion become that he struck the eagle a great blow that sent his feathers flying. The birds were frightened and flew away, the animals took to their heels, and there was no one left in the glade but the eagle who could not very well fly without his feathers.

Now, in a village that lay close to the forest there lived a man and a wife. The wife was an ill-tempered woman who was always scolding her husband, and one day, having given him a good tongue-lashing, she sent him off hunting in the forest. The man was long on his way and he happened to come out on to the glade where the animal court had been held. Seeing the featherless eagle, he loaded his gun and took aim, but the gun misfired, and the eagle, hearing the click, turned round.

"Do not kill me, my good man, for you may have need of me," said he. "Better take me home and feed me till my feathers grow out again."

The man lowered his gun, and, picking up the eagle, carried him home.

The wife met her husband with a round of abuse.

"What did you bring the eagle for?" cried she. "What good will he be? He'll only eat up our grain; and we haven't enough for ourselves!"

She went on like that for a long time, but her husband paid her no heed, and the eagle stayed in the house and lived there for a whole year. By then his feathers had begun to grow, and, when a second year had passed, he said to the man:

"Set me free and let me try and see if I can fly. And don't worry. If all goes well, I'll come back to you."

The man set him free, and the eagle soared to the sky, but, seeing him, the wife flew into a temper and began to scold again.

"Why did you let him go? He was a good eagle!" cried she.

The eagle was back the same evening.

"Keep me in your house and feed me for another year, and then all will be well," said he to the man.

The man took him in again, and the eagle lived in the house like one of the family, doing the chores willingly but speaking little.

Three years went by, and at the end of the third year the eagle said to the man:

"I am healed at last, and sound in body and mind. Set me free and I will fly to the glade where you found me. And you must take some rusks and come to the glade too."

The man set the eagle free and watched him fly away, and then he made himself some rusks and started out on his journey. He reached the glade soon enough, and lo!—there was the eagle waiting for him. He came up to him, and the eagle said:

"Get on my back, and we'll fly off together!"

The man got on the eagle's back, and away they flew!

Whether a long time passed by or a short, nobody knows, but the eagle dropped down in another glade, and he said to the man:

"Go into town, to the church there, join the worshippers and pray with them, and then go outside and sit at the church door. When the service ends, you will see a beautiful woman coming out of the church with the rest. That will be my older sister and she will ask about me."

The man set out for the town and soon came to the church. He joined the others in prayer, and then went outside, sat down by the church door and waited.

After a while the people began filing out of the church, and there among them was a most beautiful woman richly dressed in robes of gold. She seemed distressed about something, and she approached now one, now another of those who were waiting by the door and asked them about her brother.

"It is three years since my brother left home, and he is still away," she said. "Have you not heard something about him?"

None replied, for they could tell her nothing, but the woman would not give up and repeated her question a second and then a third time. The man was certain now that she was the eagle's sister.

"I have seen your brother and know where he is," said he.

"Do bring him here!" the woman begged. "I will reward you richly, never fear. Just tell me what it is you would like."

"I would like the casket that stands on your window-sill," said the man, for that was what the eagle had told him to say.

But the woman would not give up her casket, and the man returned to the glade and told the eagle about it.

The eagle put the man on his back again, they flew on further, and when night descended came down in a third glade.

They spent the night there, and in the morning the eagle said to the man:

"Go to the same church, pray as you have before, and then go outside and wait for the selfsame woman to come out. You will know that she is the one when she says, as she is bound to: 'Have you not heard the songs that were sung and the tales that were told about the eagle?'"

The man went to the church and joined the worshippers, but was soon outside and waiting by the door again. After a while the people began filing out of the church, and the selfsame woman came out with the rest and asked about the eagle. But the man was silent, and it was not until she had asked her question for the third time that he said:

"I have heard songs sung about the eagle and tales told about him, and I can bring him to you now if you like."

"And what will you want of me in return?" the woman asked.

"Nothing but the casket that stands on your window-sill."

"I have not seen my brother for three years, but I cannot give up my casket," the woman said.

The man then went back to the eagle and told him all about it, and the eagle having put him on his back, on they flew again.

Whether they were long on the way or not, nobody knows, but by and by they came down in a fourth glade.

They spent the night there, and early the next morning the man set out for the church again. He said his prayers and then went outside and waited by the door.

By and by the selfsame woman came out and began asking about the eagle, but it was not till she had asked about him for the third time that the man said:

"I have seen your brother, and I can bring him here if you like."

"What will you want of me in return?" the woman asked.

"Nothing but the casket that stands on your window-sill," the man replied.

"Very well. Bring me my brother, and you can have the casket," said the woman.

The man went back to the eagle and told him all about it, and the eagle having put him on his back, on they flew again. By and by the man looked at the ground spreading below, and he saw what looked like a village or a town there. Down they came, but no sooner did the eagle touch the ground than he vanished as if into thin air. The man now looked about him, and, seeing a house close by, opened the door and walked in. There were people there, and they welcomed him warmly, helped him wash and change his clothes and treated him to the best of their food and drink. The man ate till he could eat no more and drank till his head began to spin and he could not for the world have said how long he had been there. He was trying to figure this out when another man, handsome and richly dressed, came into the room.

"Do you know how many days you have spent here?" asked he.

"Three, it must be," the first man replied.

"Is that all?" laughed the other. "Well, you are quite wrong, for you have spent not three days but three years here." And he added: "Come, now, don't you know me? I am the eagle on whose back you arrived here. Tell me, friend, would you like to go back to your own home now?"

"I would indeed!" the first man replied.

The Eagle, for that is what we will now call him, left the room, but he was soon back again, bringing the casket that had been his sister's.

"How would you like me to give you this casket?" asked he.

"What would I do with it?"

"Don't be silly! This casket is no ordinary casket but a magic one. Come, let us go outside, and you will see." 173

They went outside, the Eagle opened the casket, and lo!—it vanished as though it had never been, and there before them stood a hut. The Eagle pressed on a hinge, and two maids appeared.

"What do you wish?" asked they.

"Something to eat," said the Eagle.

The maids brought in a table laden with all sorts of food, and when the men had eaten, took it away again.

The Eagle then pressed on a second hinge, and another two maids appeared.

"What do you wish?" asked they.

"A good bed to sleep on," said the Eagle.

The maids brought in a good bed with fine feather mattresses, the men lay down on it and fell asleep, and in the morning when they got up again, the maids took everything away.

"How do you like my casket?" the Eagle asked.

"I like it very much," the man replied.

"Well, then, fold the house and put it back into it."

And he showed the man how this was done.

The man folded the hut and put it in the casket, and then he set out homewards. On and on he walked, and when evening came, opened the casket, had the maids bring him some food, ate it and went to bed. He was on his way again on the following morning, but by midday felt hungry and thirsty and thought he would have some tea. He opened the casket and ate and drank his fill, but when it was time to fold the house and fit it into the casket he found that he had forgotten how to do it. This made him very sad, so down he sat by the door with bowed head and never once looked up.

By and by an old man, who happened to be passing by there, came up to him.

"Why so sad and pensive, my good man?" asked he.

"I forgot how to fold this hut and fit it in the casket again," the man replied.

"What will I get for my trouble if I do it for you?"

"What would you like?"

"That which your wife shows you first when you get back home."

"Very well!" agreed the man, saying to himself: "A strange request. What can my wife show me that's so wonderful!"

The old man folded the hut, put it in the casket and went away, and the man walked on again. He reached his house soon enough, and there was his wife coming out to greet him with a handsome lad at her side!

"Why, that must be my own son born while I was away from home!" the man told himself. "What a fool I've been! The old man knew very well what he asked of me, and now I shall have to give up my own son to him."

He brought out the casket and opened it, and he and his wife and son all came into the hut. They ate and they drank and went to bed, and the man told his wife all about everything.

"I shall have to give up our son to the old man," said he.

They got up in the morning, and lo! — there at the door was a red dog. It uttered not a sound, but the man knew without having been told that it had come to take away his son.

"You must go where this dog leads you, my son," said he.

The lad did as he was told, and away he went with the dog.

They were on their way for a long, long time, so that the lad was a grown youth and they still had not reached their journey's end. But at last there came a day when the dog vanished, and the youth was left all alone. Dawn had just risen, and he looked and saw before him a lake with three swan maidens splashing in the water, two of them keeping close to each other and the third a little apart from them. He drew nearer and saw three gowns on the shore, one of them lying some distance away from the other two. He took this gown and hid it, and he was just in time, for the swan maidens now came out of the water. Two of them put on their gowns, but the third could not find hers and burst into tears.

"Who has taken my gown?" asked she. "Do give it back to me, whoever you are, for you may have need of me some day."

The youth gave her back her gown, and the swan maiden put it on and said:

"Come and pay us a visit, good youth. We live far away from

here, but when you come to our village you will know at once which house is ours, as it stands in a remote spot, away from the rest." 175

The youth sat on the shore all day long and all night, too, and in the morning the red dog returned and led him further. He followed the dog all night, and with the first ray of dawn it vanished again as it had before.

There were houses just ahead, and, when he drew nearer to them, the youth saw that one of them stood a little way off from the rest. It was for this house that the youth now made, and when he reached it, came inside without knocking.

A pretty maid met him there, she gave him food and drink, and then she sent him off to see her grandfather who lived in a neighbouring house. The youth came up to this house, but he was quite taken aback when he saw, stuck into the ground just in front of it, twelve spears, eleven of them crowned with human heads.

"Is it my head, then, that is to crown the twelfth spear?" thought the youth.

He came inside and was met by an old man.

"What has taken you so long to get here?" the old man asked. "I have a task I wish to set you. You must build me a house and have it ready by morning."

The youth felt sad and crestfallen, and back he went to the maid.

"I shall never be able to build a house in the space of one night!" said he.

But the maid only smiled.

"Do not be sad, for I shall help you," said she. "Go to bed now, and by morning the house will be ready."

The youth took heart at this and went to bed, and in the morning there was the house all built and ready! The youth at once went and told the old man about it, and the old man was much surprised and could hardly believe it.

"Good lad!" said he. "But here is another task for you. I want you to break in a horse that has not been near a man for seven years."

"That shouldn't be hard to do!" thought the youth. "I have been around horses all my life."

Back he went to the maid and told her about the task the old man had set him.

"It is by no means an easy task," said the maid. "For the horse will be no ordinary horse but the old man himself in its shape. But you need fear nothing, for I shall help you. Just you go to the forest now and bring me some bark."

The youth did as she told him, and when he had brought back the bark, the maid made a saddle and whip out of it. These she gave to the youth, and he took them and set out for the old man's house.

He came into the yard, and there was the horse prancing about in it. It tried to hit out and kick him, but the youth flourished his whip and struck the horse so hard that it fell on its side at his feet! It scrambled up again at once, but the youth was quick and jumped on its back. The horse leapt up and raced across the yard, going so fast that it seemed to fly through the air, but the youth held on for dear life, and, try as it would, it could not unseat him. The youth lashed away at the horse's ears and forced it to slow its pace, and he only stopped when the horse dropped to the ground, more dead than alive. Leaving it lying there, he went to see the girl.

"I have broken in the horse," said he. "It is quite tame now."

He spent the night in the maid's house, and in the morning went to tell the old man that he had done as he had been told. He came to the old man's house, and there was the old man lying on the stove and gasping!

"I have done what you told me to do," the youth said.

"Only because my granddaughter helped you," the old man returned. "I have decided to marry you two. Come to the bathhouse tomorrow, both of you, and we shall talk about it."

The youth was overjoyed and went and told the maid about it.

"Your grandfather wants us to marry," said he.

"That is what he said, but not what he meant," replied the girl. "My grandfather is a wicked sorcerer and wants to do away with us."

Morning arrived, and they went to the bathhouse, but no sooner were they inside than the old man came and poured oil over it and set it alight. Flames swept over the building, and the heat was overpowering, so the girl dropped to the floor and she turned

herself into a needle and the youth into a thread. They climbed out through the keyhole, and, each getting back his proper shape, took to their heels. They made for the house of the youth's parents, they ran for a long time, and then the girl dropped to the ground and put her ear to it to hear if anyone were following them. The sound of hoof-beats reached her and the yelling of men, and she knew that the old sorcerer had sent his servants in pursuit.

The sounds came closer now, and the maid turned herself into a church and the youth into a church elder. The church bells began to ring, and the old man's three servants, all of them armed, came riding up.

"Have you seen a man and a woman passing by here, Grandpa?" asked they of the church elder who, if they only knew it, was the very man they were after.

"So I have," the elder replied, "but long ago, when this church was just being built. The stones are grown with moss, as you can see. Take some of the moss and show it to your master if he doesn't believe you."

The men took the moss and went back to the old man.

As soon as they were out of sight, the maid and the youth each got back their proper shapes and ran on again. And the old man's servants came back to him and showed him the moss.

"What fools you are!" the old man cried. "The two you were after took on the shape of the church and the church elder, and you should have known it and seized them then and there. Make haste and go after them again!"

Away ran the servants, but when they reached the place where the church had stood, there was nothing there!

The maid and the youth were far ahead by then and running still, and after a while the maid dropped to the ground and put her ear to it again. She heard the sound of hoof-beats coming close, and she changed herself into a herd of sheep and the youth into a shepherd.

By and by the old man's three servants came riding up and they asked of the shepherd if he had seen a youth and a maid pass by.

"I did see them," said the shepherd, "but long ago. I only had one sheep at the time and now I have a herd of over a hundred. You'll never catch those two, so go back to your master. Snip some wool

from the back of one of my sheep and show it to him if he doubts what you say."

The servants believed the shepherd and turned back, and as soon as they were out of sight, the maid got back her proper shape, and the youth his, and the two of them ran on again.

The old man's servants came back to him, they told him all about everything and showed him the wool they had snipped from the sheep's back, and the old man flew into a temper and berated them at the top of his voice.

"Fools that you are!" cried he. "You should have known enough to see that they were the very ones you were after. I shall go after them myself now!"

The maid and the youth were far ahead by then and running still, and after a while the maid dropped to the ground and put her ear to it.

"We are in a bad way," she said, "for the old man himself is after us. All we can do now is each take another shape. You shall turn into a lake, and I into a perch."

The youth at once became a lake, and the girl a perch swimming about in it, but this did not confuse the old man who reached the lake in two strides, stopped and said:

"Here you are, you two! I'll catch you soon enough, never fear."

He took off his clothes and changed into a pike, and the pike leapt into the lake and went after the perch. But the perch kept turning his prickly tail toward him, and, hard as the pike tried, he could not swallow him.

The pike was quite worn out.

"Turn your side to me, perch!" said he.

"Aren't you sly, pike!" the perch returned. "Why don't you try catching me by the tail!"

The pike said nothing. Out he leapt on to the shore and turned back into the old man, and the perch turned into a duck.

"I am a sorcerer, and shall do with you as I please," said the old man. "You, lake, shall be a lake always, and you, duck, a duck."

"I can make magic myself," the duck returned. "You shall be a stone, old man, and lie on the lake shore for ever and ever."

The old man was frightened.

"Wait!" cried he. "I do not want to be a stone any more than you want to be a duck. Our own proper shapes will do very nicely for us. The maid had better be a maid, the youth, a youth, and I, the old man that I am. There is nothing to be done. You shall go your way and I will go mine."

And off he went without another word. The maid then got back her proper shape, and the youth his, and they at once set out on their way again. They had all but reached the house where lived the youth's mother and father when the maid stopped and said:

"I'll stay here and wait for you, and you go into the house by yourself. Greet everyone warmly, but do not take your brother's child in your arms and kiss him or you will forget me."

"Very well," said the youth.

He came inside and greeted everyone warmly and was greeted by them in return. His mother had aged and was now a grandmother, and she brought her grandchild, her other son's child, for the youth to kiss. He would not do so at first, but could not resist his mother's pleas, and, taking the child in his arms, kissed him. The same moment he had forgotten all about the maid he had brought with him and who was waiting for him outside, and when his father told him that it was time for him to marry and have a child of his own, he said he was nothing loath.

Whether a long time passed by or a short, nobody knows, but his parents found him a bride, and the date for the wedding was soon set. And as for the maid he had left behind, she took lodgings in the house of a woman who lived in the same village.

Now, the youth's parents, knowing nothing about it, bade this woman bake them a loaf of bread for the wedding feast, and when she had baked and brought it them, they placed the loaf on the table before the son and his bride. The youth began cutting the bread, and lo!—two birds came flying out of it. He tried cutting it again, and two more birds flew out. The youth and his bride were frightened, and the youth gave the loaf to his mother and told her to throw it away.

This the mother did, but the same moment a maid they had never seen before, dressed in rags and her face streaked with dirt, came up to the house.

"I am versed in magic and can show you something you have never seen before!" said she.

"Go ahead!" said the youth.

The maid broke off a piece of the loaf, put it on a wooden board and placed the board on the ground, and then she fashioned a lake, a perch, a pike and a duck and threw them in the lake. And all the time, the birds she had with her kept skipping round the lake, pecking at the bread and saying every now and then:

"He has forgotten me, he has forgotten me...."

As he watched them, the youth recalled what had been and remembered her who had saved him from the wicked sorcerer. He now knew that the maid before him was no other than the one he had loved so dearly. He put his arms round her and said for all to hear:

"Here is the maid who saved me from death, and she is the one who will be my wife!"

And married they were then and there and lived happily ever after.

The Two Brothers

A Dolgan Fairy Tale



Long, long ago, when there were no bitter frosts and, where now spreads the tundra, rustled age-old forests, there lived a man by the name of Kyyl-Kihi the Wild Man and his wife.

Their house stood on the top of a hill with no other human habitation nearer than several hundred miles away, and they lived by hunting wild deer and catching fish. They were very lonely, for they had no children, and not a day passed but the wife would say to her husband:

"How I wish we did not have to live all by ourselves! Why don't you go and try to find where it is other people are? We've been living on this hilltop for nearly twenty years, and it's ever so dull and lonely!"

There was nothing for it, and Kyyl-Kihi got ready to set out from home. He did not really know where to go, for he had never strayed far while out on his hunting trips, but he put together a few belongings, and, taking a bow and three arrows, said to his wife:

"I will send an arrow here every year, so that you might know that I am alive. But if, after you get the last of my arrows, a year passes by with no sign from me, it will mean that I am dead. Then you must leave this place and go to seek other people who will take you in. Only you must follow another road and not the one I am taking today."

And with these words Kyyl-Kihi marched off in the direction of the rising sun. He did not know how long a time passed by, he only

knew that if it rained it was summer, and if it snowed, winter. He crossed turbulent rivers, made his way through thick forests and came across wild animals of a kind he had never seen before, but he never met any people.

A year passed, and Kyyl-Kihi shot an arrow in the direction of the setting sun; another year passed, and he sent a second arrow in the same direction, but in all this time he had only come across birds and animals and had not seen a single human being.

Yet another year passed, and Kyyl-Kihi sent off his third arrow, and then, half a year more, and at last there was only one day left before the year was up and there would be nothing for him to do but go back to his wife.

Kyyl-Kihi had now reached the shore of a river, and, feeling tired and spent, he sat down on a large stone and was soon deep in thought. He was roused from his reverie by the sound of human voices. They were muffled and faint, for they came from afar, but so great was Kyyl-Kihi's joy that he jumped to his feet and ran along the shore in the direction from which they were coming. All of a sudden, when his strength was all but giving out, he saw, standing on a high bank, a large and beautiful house. There were children running about near it, and, sitting pensively on a bench watching them, was a man some years older than Kyyl-Kihi and richly dressed.

Kyyl-Kihi felt shy, for he had not looked on his own kind for many years, and he kept his eyes fastened on the man's face for some time before coming up to him and saying:

"Nearly four years have passed since I left my house, for nearly four years have I been walking in the direction of the rising sun without so much as hearing the sound of a human voice, and I am very happy indeed to have found you. But tell me what your thoughts are, for I fear I have broken in upon them."

Said the man in the rich clothes:

"I am thinking of my brother whom I lost over thirty years ago. I was a boy in my early teens then and he was only a child, and once, without his knowledge, we followed our father to the forest. My brother began hunting for berries, and I was so engrossed watching a squirrel springing from tree to tree that I never noticed

how or when he wandered away from me. That was how I lost him and I was never able to find him since, search as I did, or forgive myself for having been so careless. But our father told me on his death-bed that I must not despair, for even if fifty years should pass, I would have my brother back again one day and we would live together as before. He left the two of us a herd of a thousand horses, a handsome house and many costly things, but I alone have the use of them, for my brother is not here to share them with me. But tell me who you are, where you come from and what your name is."

Kyyl-Kihi told the man his name and how for nearly twenty years he had lived with his wife on a hilltop, had hunted and fished for a living and had finally gone off to seek other people. Then, having related the many adventures he had had during his long travels, he said:

"If my wife does not hear from me by tomorrow she will think that I am dead, perhaps killed. She will then leave our house for ever, and I will never see her more."

Now, the man in the rich clothes knew that his lost brother had a large birthmark on the sole of his left foot, and, always having believed his dead father's prophecy, he secretly hoped that Kyyl-Kihi might be this brother. He and his wife gave Kyyl-Kihi food and drink and put him to bed, but they decided to wait till he was asleep before examining his left foot and making sure that he was the one they had vainly been trying to find for so long.

As soon as Kyyl-Kihi, who was worn out from his travels, was fast asleep, his host stole quietly to his bedside and drew back the blanket. He let out a little gasp of surprise, for there, on the sole of the sleeping man's left foot, was a large birthmark.

"My brother! I have found my brother!" he cried. "Come, all, and look at my brother!"

And he threw his arms around the sleeping man.

Kyyl-Kihi woke with a start and was amazed to find himself in his host's embrace. When he learnt that this rich and handsome man was his own brother he could hardly believe in his good luck, but there was the birthmark to show that this could be true. He searched his memory, but could think of nothing save that he had

been brought up by an old woman who called herself his foster-mother, and had later married her only daughter.

"Wait!" said he. "Let us not be too ready to rejoice before we have learnt for a fact that we are indeed brothers. If anyone knows anything about my past it can only be my wife, for her mother, who is now dead, might have told her something about it. And it is high time for me to be going back for her in any case, for I fear that she will think me dead and will leave our house before I get there."

With this the man who called himself Kyyl-Kihi's brother could not but agree.

On the following morning he led a golden-maned horse up to Kyyl-Kihi and said:

"Get on this horse, ride home and bring your wife here, for I would like to hear the story of your life from her lips. Make haste now, as I do not like to be parted from you of whom I already think as of my brother and the younger son of the great warrior Ersyo."

Kyyl-Kihi got on the golden-maned horse's back, gave a loud shout, and, the wind whistling in his ears, rode away at a gallop across forests and mountains and over seas and oceans, straight toward the setting sun.

A little time passed by, and in the distance, on the top of a high hill, Kyyl-Kihi saw his house. At sight of it his heart began to pound with joy, and with fear too, lest his wife should leave before he got there. And, in fact, he was not far from right, for she was already putting her things together before starting out on her way. It was then that a fearful howling, like that of a hurricane, assailed her ears. The house shook, the window panes rattled, and when she looked out, there was her husband Kyyl-Kihi on his golden-maned horse come to take her away with him.

Their reunion was a joyous one, and on the very next day away they flew on the back of the golden-maned horse for the house of Ersyo the Warrior's older son.

They arrived there before long, and only then did Kyyl-Kihi ask his wife if her mother had ever told her anything of the past or of the way he had come to be living in their house.

"She only said she found you wandering in the forest alone, quite dazed with fear and hunger," the wife said. "You were a little boy

then and she took you in and brought you up together with me. There was nothing to show who you were except for a bow and arrow you had with you. These she put away and made me promise never to part with them. They are right here in my bag now." And she reached into her bag and brought out a small, cunningly contrived bow and an arrow specially made for it.

"Why, this bow and this arrow were fashioned by my own father's hand!" cried the older brother at sight of them. "Besides being stronger and cleverer than any man living he was also a craftsman like no other." And he added: "But there — that is all the proof that was needed. Now I know beyond doubt that you are indeed my brother!"

The brothers were overjoyed. They embraced and held each other close, the older brother divided between them all that their father, the mighty warrior Ersyo, had left them, and then he invited guests from all parts of the land to join him in a great feast.

The two brothers set up house together and were chosen by the people to rule the land. They proved to be worthy of their father, the mighty warrior Ersyo, whose one behest had been not to allow wars to flare up, and throughout their rule men lived in peace and prosperity. Even today, if ever men hear that there is bloodshed and war anywhere on earth, they shake their heads and say:

"What a pity that the mighty warrior Ersyo and his two sons are no more, for had they been alive, this could not have been."

The Old Man and the Old Woman

A Nivkh Fairy Tale



Once upon a time there was an old man and an old woman who were very, very poor. They went hungry often, did not so much as know the smell of good food, and would even gather and eat the dead fish cast out on to the seashore by waves.

Now, the old man and the old woman had one daughter who, without their noticing it, had grown up to be very beautiful. The girl lived with her parents, hungered with them, and, like them, ate whatever the earth and the sea might yield.

One spring the family were left without any food at all and did not know what to do. The old man went down to the seashore in the hope of coming upon a dead fish or animal on the sand, but though he wandered around for a long time, found nothing.

There was a large stone lying on the shore, and he sat down on it and let his head sink on to his breast.

"How can I go home? What will I feed my wife and daughter with?" said he with a sigh.

He sat there and sorrowed for a long time, and when at last he made up his mind to leave, cast a final hopeful glance at the sea. He saw that it had turned dark and menacing and that it seethed and boiled like water in a cauldron.

All of a sudden a large whale was flung out by waves on to the shore, and at once six great walruses, the lords of the sea, leapt out after him, cut him up to pieces with their sabres and vanished in the sea again.

The old man, who had hidden himself behind the stone, dared hardly breathe. But he now crept up to the dead whale, and there, lying beside him, found a sabre. 187

"The sea has brought me a rich present!" cried he, overjoyed.

He picked up the sabre, and, cutting a good slice of meat from the whale's side, went home. He gave the meat and sabre to the old woman who first hid the sabre away in a large box and then lit the fire, cooked the meat and fed her husband and daughter.

Having eaten their fill, the old man and the old woman lay down and fell asleep. They slept soundly, and it was dawn by the time they woke. Glancing round them, they at once saw that their daughter was not in the tent and that her bed had not been slept in, and so bad did this make them feel that they burst into tears.

"Where has our child gone to?" sobbed they.

As soon as the sun was up, they came out of the tent and began searching for their daughter. They searched to no avail till dark, but when they came back to the tent there was their daughter sitting at the entrance and looking sadly up at them.

"Where have you been, my child?" the old woman asked.

But the daughter was like one deaf and dumb. She uttered not a sound and only wrung her hands.

The three of them came inside, but they could not sleep or talk either, and were tormented by a terrible grief.

All of a sudden the daughter rose and went to the door, and no sooner did she step over the threshold than she vanished as if into thin air.

Spring came round again without her having returned, and one day, while out on the shore looking for a good place to fish, the old man found himself near the stone he had sat on the year before.

He sat down on it and gazed at the sea, and he kept thinking of his daughter and wishing that he could see her again.

"Come to me, my child!" he whispered. "Come to me from wherever it is you are, even if it is the bottom of the sea."

And as he looked he saw that the sea had turned dark and menacing and was seething and boiling like water in a cauldron.

Suddenly six giant walruses, six lords of the sea, rose up out of the water on the crest of a wave, and there, sitting on the back of one of them, was the old man's daughter.

A trembling seized the old man, he began to weep and to cry, saying over and over again:

"O my child, my own child, from the bottom of the sea have you come to me! Will you not say a word to your father?"

"I will, father, I will!" the daughter replied. "Listen to me carefully. You angered the lords of the sea by taking away their sabre, and I am made to pay for it. Go home and tell my mother all about it and come back to this stone again in a year's time."

She vanished in the sea, and the old man went home and said to the old woman:

"The lords of the sea are keeping our daughter hostage. I do not know whether she will ever return to us, but she bade me come to see her again in a year's time."

A year passed, spring came round again, and the old man went down to the shore, and, sitting down on the selfsame stone, fastened his eyes on the sea.

"Come to me, my child!" he called softly. "Come to me from wherever it is you may be, even if it is the bottom of the sea!"

All at once a huge wave struck the shore, and out of the depths rose a giant walrus, the lord of the sea, with the old man's daughter on his back. The walrus swam up to the shore, and the old man's daughter sprang down from his back and stood before her father. The old man looked and could hardly believe his eyes.

His daughter's hair had grown longer, her face was more beautiful than ever, and in her arms lay a crowing, smiling baby.

The daughter pressed the baby close and she said to her father:

"Do not come here any more, father, for I will not be here for you to see. I have married the lord of the sea, have borne him a son—here he is in my arms—and must remain at the bottom of the sea. Tell my mother that I am happy and that she must not grieve for me or miss me too much. From now on you will want for nothing. If it is meat you desire, come down to the shore, and you will have it. I will send you as many seals as you wish for. You can eat your fill and not fear anything any more!"

And having had her say, she climbed on the walrus's back again. The walrus swam quietly off from shore and plunged into the sea, and he and the girl and her baby vanished. 189

The old man went home, weeping bitterly.

"Our daughter will never return to us any more," said he to his wife. "She has married the lord of the sea and borne him a son, and she must remain at the bottom of the sea always. She bade me tell you that she is happy and you must not grieve for her, and she said that from now on you and I will want for nothing."

And as the daughter had said, so it was. The old man and the old woman lived for a good many years more, but they never went hungry any more. Whenever the old man came down to the shore, he found dead seals there, and he and the old woman came to know the taste of good food at last. But they never saw their daughter again.

Kutkh and the Fox

An Itelmen Fairy Tale



Kutkh was a tailor and he spent all of his time sewing.

One day he was sitting at the window making himself a pair of breeches when something came between him and the light.

"What can it be?" thought Kutkh. "My nose, I suppose. How very annoying!"

He cut off his nose and went back to his sewing, but something came between him and the light again.

"It must be my cheeks," Kutkh told himself. "I think I'll cut them off too."

So he cut off his cheeks, but as this did not help, Kutkh decided that nothing would and that it was simply growing dark outdoors. He went back to work, but could not get on with it at all so badly did his face hurt where he had cut it, and soon found himself moaning and sighing and doing little else. He glanced out of the window, and what did he see but some baby mice rolling playfully about on the ground.

"So that's who has been coming between me and the light!" Kutkh cried, and, the breeches he had been working on still in his hands, went outside. He came up close to the mice and said:

"I see you are having a lot of fun rolling about there, little ones. Now, why don't you let me give you a ride? Just roll up on to these breeches here, and I will."

And he held out the breeches.

But the mice hesitated.

"You might catch us if we do that," said they.

"Never you fear, I won't do you any harm," said Kutkh. "I only want you to enjoy yourselves." 191

The mice were taken in by these words and did as Kutkh asked, and Kutkh at once sewed up the breeches so they could not climb out of them and carried them off to the forest. He looked about for a good tree, and, when he had found one to his liking, said:

"Come, tree, bend down!"

The tree bent down, and Kutkh hanged the breeches with the mice in them on its topmost branch.

"Come, tree, stand straight!" said he.

The tree stood up straight, and Kutkh went home, leaving the mice squeaking loudly in fear.

By and by who should come running up but the Fox.

"Why are you squeaking so, mice?" asked she.

"Because of what Kutkh did to us," the mice replied, and they told the Fox how they had been rolling about on the ground, how Kutkh had persuaded them to roll up on to his breeches and how he had sewn them up and hanged them on the topmost branch of the tree.

"What did Kutkh say before hanging you there?" the Fox asked.

"Come, tree, bend down, that's all he said," said the mice.

"Come, tree, bend down!" the Fox cried.

The tree at once bent down, and the Fox ripped up the breeches and took out the mice. They were alive and well, all save one who had been trampled on by the others and had swooned away.

The Fox told the mice to gather pieces of rotting wood and be quick about it, and when they had gathered enough, to put them, with the sick mouse on top, in the breeches. This they did, and the Fox said:

"Now, mice, tell me — what did Kutkh say after hanging you on the branch?"

"Come, tree, stand straight, that's all he said," said the mice.

"Come, tree, stand straight!" the Fox cried.

The tree at once stood up straight, and the Fox led the mice off to her house. They were soon there, and the Fox then told the mice to bring in any remnants of food they might find and also cones and pieces of bark and put them in the trough that stood in a corner. The mice did so, and then they all ran away and hid in the garret.

Two days passed by, and on the third day Kutkh rose very early and set out for the forest. He went gaily along and felt as pleased as could be that he would have something nice to eat for a change.

He came to the tree where he had left the mice and told it to bend down, and when it did, put his hand in through a small hole in the breeches and pulled out the sick mouse. Now, the mouse had come out of its swoon long since, but, finding itself in Kutkh's hands, lay very still and pretended to be dead.

"Good! Excellent!" Kutkh cried. "My wife Mitti and I will have a fine meal."

He put the mouse back in the breeches, and, never seeing that it slipped out immediately afterwards and scuttled away, carried the breeches home.

"How heavy these dead mice are!" said he to himself as he went along. "They were much lighter when they were alive."

He came home and he told Mitti to make the bed, saying to her:

"We'll lie down and rest a while first and then have supper."

They lay down on the bed, and the Fox, who had been following Kutkh all the time without his seeing her, watched them from behind the door.

As soon as Kutkh and Mitti were asleep and snoring away, she gathered some hawthorn thorns and strewed them over the floor, and herself ran home, smeared her face with alder dye and waited.

By and by Kutkh woke, and he nudged Mitti in order to wake her too.

"It's time to get up, Mitti!" said he. "Go get us some of those nice mice, so we can eat and enjoy ourselves."

Mitti jumped to the floor, but, alas for her, she stepped on a thorn!

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried she.

"What's the matter now, silly?" Kutkh asked.

But Mitti could say nothing and only moaned in reply. She picked up Kutkh's breeches, ripped them up, and gave another "Oh!"—of surprise this time.

"Someone's fooled you, Kutkh!" she cried. "There are no mice here but only pieces of rotten wood."

"Don't you see well, Mitti?" Kutkh said. "Why, I took one dead mouse out of the breeches myself in the forest."

He got down from the bed, but stepped on a thorn in his turn and was quite overcome with the pain.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried he.

He reached for his breeches and saw that Mitti had indeed been speaking the truth, for they were filled not with dead mice but with pieces of rotten wood. Kutkh was very angry and knew at once that it was the Fox who had tricked him.

"Give me a stick and a poker, Mitti, and I'll go and kill the Fox!" said he.

Mitti gave him a stick and a poker, and Kutkh set out for the Fox's house. He reached it soon enough, and as he came near, heard loud moans coming from within.

"Are you sick that you are moaning so, Fox?" asked he. "I have come to ask you who took my mice down from the tree. You, if anyone, must know."

"Oh no, Kutkh, I don't, I'd have told you if I did," the Fox replied. "I've been very, very sick and unable to go out for a whole month. See that trough there? It's full of garbage, but I haven't the strength to carry it out and empty it. I wish someone would do it for me!"

Now, this made Kutkh feel very sorry for the Fox.

"Let me do it!" he offered.

"Thank you, neighbour, I'll never forget your kindness!" the Fox cried. "And as soon as I get well I'll try to help you all I can too. Only don't look back as you are carrying out the trough, for if you do, you might drop it, and then think of the trouble you'll have picking up the garbage."

Kutkh took the trough and went out, but as he did not look back,

never noticed that the Fox was following him. They came to a hill and climbed to its top, and as Kutkh lifted the trough to throw out the garbage, the Fox gave him such a push that he toppled down the hillside, trough and all.

The Fox came home and let the mice out of the garret, and they all lived happily ever after, for Kutkh was much too frightened by his fall to ever touch them again.

The Man and the Water Sprite

A Tofalar Fairy Tale



Long, long ago there lived a water sprite. One day he saw a man laying some nets out on the ground.

"What are you doing that for?" asked he.

"In order to have the nets ready to hand to cast in the river and catch some fish in," the man replied.

Now, the water sprite disliked the idea of giving up his fish and he told himself that he would fight the man and stop him from catching them.

They came to grips, but the water sprite proved to be no match for the man who quickly got the better of him.

"I'll fight you again tomorrow," the water sprite promised.

"Not me you won't, you're not strong enough for that," the man said. "You can fight my younger brother, though."

Now, the man's younger brother was a bear, and it was him the man meant to send out against the water sprite. But he never got around to doing it, for the water sprite crept up to the bear, who was picking at some grass, and pounced on him. They grappled together, but the bear, like the man before him, proved to be the stronger of the two and soon had the water sprite on the run.

The water sprite would not give up so easily, and on the next day, just to show what he could do, he flung his whip into the air and sent it flying up to the sky and beyond the clouds.

The man followed the whip with his eyes.

"That's nothing!" said he. "I can fling this willow stick even higher."

And he threw the stick over his shoulder. It fell on the ground just behind him, but this the water sprite did not notice and thought that the man had made good his boast.

"I can see that all of you men are stronger than I," said he, "and quicker too, and will quarrel with you no more. You can come down from the hills where you live and catch as much fish as you want, and I will stay in the water and never so much as show myself to you any more."

And as he said so it came to be, for it is a rare thing indeed these days for a man to meet a water sprite.

The Old Man

A Yukagir Fairy Tale



There once lived an old man, a Yukagir, who roamed the forests all by himself.

One day he came across a small tent that was very neat and trim, the skins stretched tightly around the poles and the ground roundabout clean and uncluttered.

"A young and beautiful woman must live here," thought the old man. And he hid in the bushes and waited for the woman to come out of the tent. He waited for a long time, and as no one came out, decided that it was fear of something or other that kept the woman indoors.

Evening arrived, and the old man resolved to climb to the top of the tent and look inside it through the smoke hole. This he did, and there, just as he had expected, sitting near an open hearth with some sewing in her hands, was a woman. She was dressed in fine clothes, but the old man could not see her face, and as he wanted to very much, he worked away at the skins round the smoke hole in order to make it bigger. Now, the old man had never washed in his life, and his face was dirty and so was his hair which hung in long, sticky strands over his eyes, so that when he pushed it back in order to get a better look at the woman, some of the dirt dropped down on her.

The woman, thinking that an evil spirit was perched on the tent roof and that he had come to do her harm, was very frightened. She took the dried horse tendons which she had been using for thread,

and, tying them to a stick, held them over the fire. The smell of them burning, she told herself, would surely drive the evil spirit away. From the heat, the thread came unwound, and each separate strand curled up into a little ring that shrank and turned black. The acrid smell of the burning thread made the old man sneeze, and when the woman glanced up at the sound, he saw her face. To his dismay, it was not beautiful at all but ugly and wrinkled, and the old man climbed quickly down to the ground, and, fearful that the old woman might follow him, took to his heels, shouting, "Burn your thread, old one, drive the evil spirit away!"

But the old woman was frightened too, so frightened, in fact, that she could not move from the spot. She sat there till her thread was burned to a cinder, and her sewing, which she had dropped into the fire, likewise, and she didn't stir even when the fire went out and it grew dark and quiet in the tent.

But some time passed, and the old woman came back to her senses. She lighted the fire and glanced up to see if the evil spirit was still there. To her joy, she found that he was not and that everything about her was unchanged and just as it had always been. The old woman went outside, she looked all around the tent, and she noticed the tracks the old man had left on the ground. She followed them a way and saw that they led deep into the forest. Sure now that she had frightened off the evil spirit for good, the old woman returned to her tent. She fanned out the flames, made some tea and drank it, and then, at peace with herself and the world, went to bed.

Foolish Koshkli

An Eskimo Fairy Tale

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In a certain camp there lived a man named Koshkli with his wife Mitika and his son Imimkut.

Now, one day, some girls from the neighbouring tents, out walking on the seashore, found a seal there. They were avid hunters and they killed the seal, but, not wanting the foolish and lazy Koshkli to see it and carry it off, they decided to hide it. They had only just dragged the seal up from the shore when there, coming toward them, was Koshkli!

"What's that you have dragged up from the shore?" asked he.

"A tree," the girls replied.

"A tree? Why does it have flippers, then?" asked Koshkli again.

"They are not flippers, they are branches."

"Branches, my eye. You're only trying to fool me!" Koshkli cried, and he took the seal away from the girls and brought it home.

"Here, Mitika, skin this seal I have killed," said he to his wife.

Mitika was overjoyed. Putting the seal in a large wooden trough, she first skinned it and then cut up the meat and cooked it. They ate of it heartily, and what was left Mitika took to the pantry and hid behind a curtain. After that the three of them, Koshkli, Mitika and Imimkut, went to bed and fell fast asleep.

While they slept, the girls who had killed the seal slipped quietly into the pantry, ate up the meat, and, putting some stones and sand in its place, ran away.

When Koshkli, Mitika and Imimkut woke up, they at once saw that something was wrong. They looked behind the curtain in the pantry and were very much upset to see no meat there but only sand and stones.

"It was those girls again, they took away the meat!" Koshkli cried. He pulled on his sealskin trousers, and, taking his stick, ran after the girls. He overtook them soon enough and brandished his stick threateningly, but the girls cried: "Please, Koshkli, don't touch us, and we will comb out your hair for you!" and he put the stick down at once.

Taking out a large comb of whale bone, the girls began combing Koshkli's thick and matted hair, and so well did they do it that before he knew it Koshkli was fast asleep. While he slept, the girls bound his eyes with a thin band of red leather and ran away, laughing.

By and by Koshkli woke, he opened his eyes, and lo!—everything about him seemed to have acquired a reddish tinge as from a fire. Koshkli sprang to his feet and rushed home, crying: "Mitika! Come, Mitika! Our tent is on fire!"

Mitika came running, and she tore the leather band from his eyes, and so angry was Koshkli with the girls for their having made a laughing-stock of him that he snatched up his stick and ran after them. He overtook them soon enough and brandished his stick, but the girls cried: "Please, Koshkli, don't touch us, and we'll comb your hair for you!" and he dropped it again willingly.

With such vigour did the girls set to combing out Koshkli's hair that before he knew it Koshkli was fast asleep. Then the girls brought their paints and they painted bright stripes on Koshkli's nose and chin to make him look like a woman and ran away again, laughing.

By and by Koshkli woke and went to the river for a drink of water. He stood on a stone and bent over the water, and whom did he see looking up at him but a young and pretty girl with bright stripes running down her nose and chin.

"How pretty that girl is!" thought Koshkli, and he cried: "Come, pretty one, be mine! Say that you will be, and I will take you for my very own!"

He laughed gaily, and the girl in the water laughed too.

"She is laughing, that means she likes me as much as I like her!" 201
cried Koshkli again.

Wanting to seize the girl, he stretched out his hands to her, but lost his balance and fell into the water with a splash!

"Help! Help!" he cried.

Mitika came running, she pulled him out, and oh! how wet he was.

Now, do you know why all this happened? Of course you do. It's because Koshkli was so very, very foolish. But if you want to know more, you can't, for there's no more to my tale.

The Obedient Daughter-in-Law

A Yakut Fairy Tale



A certain woman, whose daughter had just married and was leaving her parents' house for that of her husband, said to her in parting that she was to obey everyone in her husband's house and do as they told her.

One morning, the girl's mother-in-law sent her to the river for water.

"What shall I scoop up the water with?" asked the girl.

At this, her sister-in-law, who had heard the question, said jestingly:

"Why, a sieve, what else!"

The girl took a sieve, went to the river and began trying to scoop up some water with it. A man who was passing by just then saw her and stopped in wonder.

"What are you doing, my girl?" he asked.

"Why, scooping up water with this sieve, as they bade me do. My mother, you see, said that I was to do as I was told in my husband's house."

The man burst out laughing.

"You are far too obedient for your own good, my dear!" said he. "You'll have a hard time of it if you listen to other people instead of doing as your own common sense tells you to."

The Quick-Witted Workman

A Dolgan Fairy Tale



There was once a poor man who hired himself out as a workman to a rich *bai*. They agreed between them that the workman was to work for the *bai* for three years, get three meals a day and be paid for the whole of the term at the end of it.

One day, the *bai* told his new workman to go to the river for water, but the workman pretended not to hear him and lay down and fell asleep instead. To punish him for it, the *bai* gave him no food for three days, and, when the fourth day came round, sent him to the forest for firewood.

The workman set out on his way and no sooner did he reach the forest than he saw a bear there. He fell on the bear and caught him, and, without giving it another thought, harnessed him to the sledge. Then, having loaded the sledge with firewood, he drove home.

Seeing the bear harnessed to the sledge, the *bai* and his wife were frightened half out of their wits and began pleading with the workman to unharness him and send him back to the forest. The workman did so, and this pleased them so much that they gave him plenty of food and drink and put him to bed for a sleep.

Three days went by, and the *bai* again bade the workman go to the forest for firewood. Off went the workman, dragging the heavy sledge behind him, but he was not long on his way when he saw a Polar bear coming toward him. Without giving the matter another thought, the workman caught the bear and harnessed him to the

sledge and then drove home, singing a song at the top of his voice all the way.

When the *bai* and his wife saw the bear, they were more frightened than ever. They began pleading with the workman to unharness him and send him back to wherever it was he came from, but the workman would not hear of it.

"If you want to be rid of the bear and of me too," said he, "then give me my pay for three years of service plus the cost of the food I would have eaten had I stayed with you that long. Be quick about it, mind, for if you don't do as I say I will set the bear on you, and he is very, very hungry!"

There was no help for it, so the *bai* gave the workman everything he asked for. Away went the workman, his pockets full of money and his sledge loaded to the top with meat, flour and other good things. And he never wanted for anything any more, so they tell me, but lived in good health and cheer and grew richer from year to year.

The Braggart

A Chukchi Fairy Tale



One day, a certain man, who was a great braggart, decided to pay his friend a visit. He drove in his sledge to his friend's tent and found him waiting for him at the door.

"Hullo there!" his friend called.

"Hullo!" the man called back.

"What's new with you?"

"Nothing, save that I've come to think that there's no one in the world more clever than I."

Now, the braggart's friend had another man staying with him, and this man now came out of the tent and said:

"I'm known to be quite clever myself, my good man, so let us see who will outwit who. Come here again tomorrow, only take the left road instead of the right."

The braggart returned home, but on the next day he set out for his friend's tent again. He rode in a sledge that was pulled by deer and he took the left road as he had been told. He was on his way for only a short time when what should he see lying on the road in front of him but a felt boot finely embroidered by hand. He gave the boot a cursory glance and rode on, and he never noticed the man who had offered to compete with him the day before crouching nearby. This man now picked up the boot, and, taking a short-cut, hurried with it to a turn further up the road. Reaching it, he put down the boot and left it there and then hid himself again.

By and by the braggart drove up to the turn in the road, and, seeing the boot, could hardly believe his eyes.

"Now, isn't that just the strangest thing that could be!" cried he. "Another boot, and every bit as fine as the first. Why, if I bring the first one here, I'll have a pair!"

He got off the sledge, and, tying his deer to a tree, went back down the road on foot.

As soon as he was out of sight, his rival came out of his hiding-place, untethered the braggart's deer, and, getting into his sledge, rode away.

By and by the braggart, empty-handed, as could be predicted, returned. He looked, and lo!—his deer and his sledge were gone and so was the boot, and it was clear that he had been got the better of.

"That was a clever man indeed!" said he to himself. "And I have only myself to blame. Why, if I hadn't said that I thought myself to be the cleverest man in the world I would not have lost my deer."

He followed the deer tracks, which led him to the man's tent, and found the man at home.

"Well, do you still think that there is no one more clever than you?" the man asked.

"No, I don't," the braggart replied. "You are far more clever than I, for you tricked me very neatly, thank you, and left me without my deer."

"And you won't get them back, either!" the man said. "It was you who bragged about being so clever and all, not I, so off you go home on foot now and let it be a lesson to you!"

There was nothing for it, so home went the braggart on foot and he never bragged again if he could help it.

The Fern Maid

A Yakut Fairy Tale



They say that one morning a little old woman, mistress of five cows, rose and went out into the field.

In the field, which was big and wide, she saw a horsetail, a fern with five shoots. She pulled it out without breaking the root or any of the shoots, brought it to her *yurta* and put it on her pillow. Then she went out again and sat down to milk her cows.

She sat there, and all of a sudden she heard the jingle-jingling of bells in the *yurta*. The old woman dropped her milk pail, and, spilling the milk in haste, ran into the *yurta*. She looked round her, but everything was as it had been: there lay the horsetail on the pillow, a fern like any other. The old woman went out once more and she sat down to milk her cows when suddenly she heard the jingle-jingling of bells again. Spilling the milk in her haste, she ran into the *yurta* and whom did she see sitting on her bed but a maid of rare beauty. The maid's eyes sparkled like precious stones and her brows were like two black sables. The fern had turned into a maid!

The little old woman was overjoyed.

"Stay with me and be a daughter to me," said she to the maid.

To this the maid agreed, and so the two of them started living in the *yurta* together.

One day a young hunter named Kharzhit-Bergen went to the taiga to hunt. He saw a grey squirrel and he shot an arrow at it. He

kept on shooting arrows from early morning till sunset, but never once did he hit the squirrel.

The squirrel bounded up a spruce-tree, leapt from the spruce-tree to a birch-tree and then on to a larch-tree, and, reaching the little old woman's *yurta*, settled in a pine-tree.

Khazhit-Bergen ran up to the pine-tree and shot another arrow, but the squirrel darted away again, and the arrow fell into the smoke hole of the little old woman's *yurta*.

"I want my arrow, old woman, give it back to me!" Khazhit-Bergen shouted, but the little old woman did not come out and made no reply.

Khazhit-Bergen was very angry, he flushed with rage and he ran into the *yurta*.

There, before him, sat a beautiful maid. Such was her beauty that it took his breath away and made his head swim. Without a word, he ran out, jumped on his horse and galloped home.

"O my parents," said he, "the little old woman, mistress of five cows, has a most beautiful maid in her *yurta*. Send matchmakers there, for I want her for my wife."

And Khazhit-Bergen's father at once sent nine men mounted on nine horses for the maid.

The matchmakers came to the little old woman's *yurta*, they saw the maid, and such was her beauty that it took their breath away. Then, coming to their senses, they all left the *yurta*, all but one, the oldest and most respected among them.

"Little old woman," said he, "will you not give this maid to Khazhit-Bergen to be his wife?"

"That I will," the little old woman replied.

They asked the maid if she was willing, and the maid said that she was.

"You will have to pay a big ransom for the bride," said the little old woman. "You must give me as many cows and horses as my field will hold."

The cows and horses were soon driven to the little old woman's field, and so many were they that one lost count of them.

Then they dressed the maid in fine new clothes, quickly and well they dressed her. They brought a dappled horse and they bridled

him with a silver bridle, saddled him with a silver saddle and hung a silver whip at his side. And Kharzhit-Bergen took his bride by the hand, led her out, put her on the dappled horse and rode home with her.

On they rode when suddenly Kharzhit-Bergen saw a fox crossing the road.

Said Kharzhit-Bergen, for he could not help himself:

"I am going to ride after the fox, but will soon be back. And you must follow this road till you reach the place where it branches off in two directions. On the eastern side a sable-skin will hang, and on the western side, the hide of a white-throated bear. Do not turn down the western road. Follow the road where you see the sable-skin."

And with these words, he galloped away.

The maid rode on alone, and in due time she reached the fork in the road. But no sooner was she there than she forgot Kharzhit-Bergen's behest. She turned down the road where the bearskin was hanging and soon came to a large iron *yurta*.

Out of the *yurta*, dressed in clothes of iron, there stepped the eighth devil's daughter. She had one leg, and that was crooked, one arm, as crooked as the leg, one hideous dead eye in the very middle of her forehead, and a long, black tongue that hung down to her breast.

The devil's daughter seized the maid, dragged her off her horse, stripped the skin from her face and stretched it over her own; then she pulled off all of the maid's fine clothes, and, dressing herself in them, threw the maid over the *yurta*. After that she mounted the dappled horse and rode eastwards.

Kharzhit-Bergen caught up with her when she was nearing his father's *yurta*. But he saw nothing and guessed nothing.

All Kharzhit-Bergen's kin gathered to welcome the bride. Nine handsome young men and eight maids came out to the tethering post to meet her.

The maids spoke amongst themselves, and they said:

"The bride has only to open her mouth and speak one word, and the prettiest beads will drop out and roll over the ground."

And they brought thread so as to string the beads.

The young men spoke amongst themselves, and they said:

"The bride has only to take one step, and wherever she passes, black sables will leap from her footprints."

And they got their bows and arrows ready so as to shoot the sables.

But when the bride started to speak, frogs dropped from her mouth, and when she took one step, mangy stoats ran after her.

All who had come to meet the bride stood aghast and grew sad at heart.

But they spread a carpet of green grass from the tethering post to the bridegroom's *yurta*, and, taking the bride by the hand, led her there.

The bride went into the *yurta*, and, using the crowns of three young larches, made up a fire in the hearth.

After that there was a wedding feast, and everyone ate and drank, played games and made merry. No one guessed that this was not the real bride at all.

Soon after this the little old woman came to her field to milk her cows. She looked, and she saw that a new horsetail with five shoots had grown up in the selfsame spot, and it was even more slender and straight than the first one.

The little old woman dug up the horsetail together with the root, took it to her *yurta* and put it on her pillow. Then she went back to the field and began milking her cows. Suddenly she heard the jingle-jingling of bells in the *yurta*. She went inside, and whom did she see there but the very same maid, looking more beautiful than ever.

"How is it that you are here, why have you come back?" the little old woman asked.

"O my mother," the maid replied, "when Khazhit-Bergen and I were on our way to his *yurta*, he told me that he was going to ride after a fox and that I was to follow the road where a sable-skin was hanging and in no wise to turn down the road where a bear's hide had been hung. But I forgot his warning, took the wrong road and soon came to an iron *yurta*. The eighth devil's daughter met me, she clawed the skin from my face and stretched it over her own. Then she pulled off all my fine clothes, and, dressing herself in

them, threw me over her iron *yurta*. After that she mounted my dappled horse and rode away. Some grey dogs seized me in their jaws and dragged me to the wide field near your *yurta*, and I came to life again in the guise of a horsetail. Ah, mother, will I ever see Kharzhit-Bergen again?"

The little old woman heard out her story and began trying to comfort her.

"Do not be troubled, you will see him," said she. "And in the meantime, stay with me as before and be my daughter."

And so the fern maid began living in the little old woman's *yurta* again.

The dappled horse learned that the fern maid had come to life, and he spoke to Kharzhit-Bergen's father in a human voice and said:

"Know that Kharzhit-Bergen left his bride alone as he was bringing her here, and she had to ride on by herself. When she reached the fork in the road she turned down the path where the bear's hide was hanging and came to an iron *yurta*. The eighth devil's daughter rushed out, tore the skin from her face and stretched it over her own, pulled off her fine clothes and dressed herself in them, and then she threw her over the iron *yurta*. Now the devil's daughter lives in your *yurta* and you have her for your daughter-in-law. And as for my true mistress, she has come to life again. You must bring her back to your *yurta* and give her to your son in marriage, else things will go hard with you. The devil's daughter will pull down your hearth and your *yurta*, she will make your life a misery and do you all to death."

Hearing this, the old man ran into the *yurta*.

"Where did you bring your wife from, my son?" asked he of Kharzhit-Bergen. "Who is she?"

"She is the daughter of the little old woman, mistress of five cows," Kharzhit-Bergen replied.

Said the father:

"The dappled horse has been complaining to me. He says that you left your bride alone as you were bringing her here and that when she reached the fork in the road she took the path that brought her to the iron *yurta*. The eighth devil's daughter dragged

her from the horse's back, clawed the skin from her face and stretched it over her own, and she put on all her fine clothes. The devil's daughter has deceived us all, she has made her home here by a wily trick. Go to the little old woman and beg your bride to return to us. Bring her here. As for the devil's daughter, tie her to the tail of a wild horse and drive the horse out into the open field. Let it strew her bones over the field! Else she will do us all to death—the men and the herds."

The devil's daughter heard him and her face turned dark with fear and rage.

Kharzhit-Bergen heard him and grew red with anger.

He seized the devil's daughter, dragged her out by her leg from the *yurta* and tied her to the tail of a wild horse.

The horse galloped off into the wide field and it kicked and trampled the devil's daughter till her black body turned into a mass of worms and snakes. And these Kharzhit-Bergen and his father gathered and burned.

After that Kharzhit-Bergen set off on horseback for the little old woman's *yurta*. He leapt from his horse by the tethering post, and the little old woman saw him and hurried out of her *yurta*. She was very happy, as happy as one is when someone thought lost has been found again. From the tethering post to the *yurta* she spread a carpet of green grass and she slaughtered her best and fattest cow and her best and fleshiest horse and began preparing the wedding feast.

As for the fern maid, she looked at Kharzhit-Bergen and she burst out crying.

"Why have you come to me?" she asked him. "You let the daughter of the eighth devil spill my blood and tear my fine skin, and you gave my body to the grey dogs. How can you come here now? There are more maids in the world than there are perches, there are more women in the world than there are carps. Go and seek for a wife among them. I will not marry you!"

"I never gave you to the daughter of the eighth devil," said Kharzhit-Bergen. "I never gave you to the grey dogs. When I rode off into the taiga after the fox I showed you the road you had to take. I did not tell you to go and meet your death."

The little old woman brushed the tears from her right eye, she brushed the tears from her left eye, and she seated herself between the fern maid and Kharzhit-Bergen.

Said the little old woman:

"How is it that you who died and then came back to life, you who were lost and then found, how is it that you do not rejoice? You two must love each other as before, you must live in friendship and peace. Heed my words, both of you, and do as I say."

Said the maid softly:

"Very well, I will do as you say, I will forgive and forget."

At this Kharzhit-Bergen jumped to his feet and began dancing and capering about and embracing and kissing the fern maid.

Then they saddled the dappled horse with a silver saddle and they bridled him with a silver bridle; they covered him with a silver horse-cloth and they hung a silver whip at his side. And the fern maid they dressed in the best of finery, and she and Kharzhit-Bergen set off on their way.

They rode a long, long time. Winter they knew by the snow that fell, summer they knew by the rain that poured, autumn they knew by the fog that hung over the fields. On and on they rode, and at last they came to the *yurta* of Kharzhit-Bergen's father.

All Kharzhit-Bergen's kin, all his nine brothers came out to meet the bride. From the tethering post to the *yurta* they spread a carpet of green grass.

"When the bride comes," said they to themselves, "she will take a step and then another, and wherever she walks, sables will leap from her footprints."

And with this in mind, they began making bows and arrows and worked so hard that the skin peeled from the palms of their hands.

As for Kharzhit-Bergen's eight sisters, they began spinning thread, and they worked so hard that the skin came off their fingers. They waited for the bride and they said to themselves:

"When she comes, she will speak up in silvery tones, and precious red beads will drop from her mouth."

Then Kharzhit-Bergen arrived with his bride, and two of his sisters tied their horses to the tethering post. They caught the bride in their arms and they let her down to the ground. The bride spoke

up in silvery tones, and red beads dropped from her mouth, and the maids began gathering the beads and threading them on a string. The bride walked to the *yurta*, and black sables leapt from her footprints, and the young men took their bows and arrows and began shooting at the sables.

The bride came into the *yurta*, and, using the crowns of three young larches, made up a fire in the hearth.

A gay wedding feast was held to which came guests from all the villages. There were singers among them and dancers, storytellers and wrestlers, and tumblers too. For three days the feast went on and then it was over, and the guests went home, on horseback and on foot.

And Kharzhit-Bergen and his wife set up house together. They lived in friendship and in peace, they lived happily and they lived long, and it is said that their grandchildren are living still.

The Girl and the Moon Man

A Chukchi Fairy Tale



There once lived among the Chukchi a man who had only one child, a daughter. The girl was her father's best helpmate. She spent every summer far away from the camping grounds, watching over her father's herd of deer, and every winter she would take the herd even farther. Only once in a while would she return to the camp for food on her draught-deer.

One night, as they were riding to the camp, the draught-deer lifted his head and glanced up at the sky.

"Look! Look!" he cried.

The girl looked up and saw the Moon Man coming down the sky on a sledge drawn by two reindeer.

"Where is he going and why?" the girl asked.

"He wants to carry you away," the deer replied.

The girl was much alarmed.

"What am I to do? He might really carry me off with him!" she cried.

Without a word the draught-deer began raking away the snow with his hoof until he had scooped out a hole.

"Come, get into this hole, quick!" he said.

The girl got into the hole, and the deer began kicking snow over her. Very soon the girl had vanished, and there was only a mound of snow to show where she had been.

The Moon Man came down from the sky, stopped his reindeer and got out of his sledge. He walked all around, looking about him

and searching for the girl. But he could not find her. He even went up to the mound and looked at the top of it, but he never guessed what it was.

"How very strange!" said the Moon Man. "Where could the girl have got to? I cannot find her. I think I'll go away now and come down again later. I'll be sure to find her then and carry her away with me."

With this, he got into his sledge, and his deer bore him off into the sky.

As soon as he had gone, the draught-deer scraped the snow away, and the girl came out of the hole.

"Let us go to the camp quickly!" she said. "Or else the Moon Man will see me and come down again. I shall not be able to hide from him a second time."

She got into her sledge and the draught-deer whisked her away as quick as lightning. They soon reached the camp, and the girl ran into her father's *choom*. But her father was out. Who would help her now?

Said the draught-deer:

"You must hide, for the Moon Man will be after us."

"Where shall I hide?" the girl asked.

"I will turn you into something—a block of stone, perhaps," said the deer.

"No, it won't do, he will discover me."

"A hammer."

"That won't do, either."

"A pole."

"No."

"A hair of the skins hanging over the door."

"No, no."

"What then? I know, I'll turn you into a lamp."

"All right."

• "Well, then, crouch down."

The girl crouched down, the deer struck the ground with his hoof, and lo!—she was turned into a lamp which burned so brightly that it lit up the whole *choom*.

Meanwhile the Moon Man had been searching for the girl among her deer, and he now came tearing on to the camping site.

He tied his own deer to a post, entered the *choom* and began looking for her again. He looked everywhere, but he could not find her. He searched in between the poles that supported the top of the *choom*, he examined every utensil, every hair on the skins, every twig under the beds, every bit of earth on the floor, but the girl was nowhere to be found.

As for the lamp, he did not notice it, for though it shone brightly, the Moon Man was brighter still.

"Strange," said the Moon Man. "Where can she be? I shall have to go back to the sky."

He came out of the *choom* and began untying the deer. He had climbed into his sledge and was about to ride away when the girl ran up to the flap of skins that hung over the door, and, leaning far out from under it, let out a peal of merry laughter.

"Here I am! Here I am!" she called to the Moon Man.

The Moon Man left his deer and rushed into the *choom*. But the girl had again turned into a lamp.

The Moon Man began to search for her. He looked over every twig and every leaf, every hair on the skins and every bit of earth, but find the girl he could not.

How very strange this was! Where could she be? Where had she disappeared to? It looked as though he would have to go back without her.

But no sooner had he left the *choom* and begun untying the deer than the girl leaned out from under the flap again.

"Here I am! Here I am!" she called with a laugh.

The Moon Man rushed into the *choom* and began to look for her again. He searched for a long time, he rummaged through everything and turned the whole place upside down, but find her he could not.

And so weary was he from the search that he turned thin and weak and could barely move his legs or lift his arms.

Now the girl was no longer afraid of him. She took on her proper shape, bounded out of the *choom*, threw the Moon Man on to his back and bound his hands and feet with a rope.

"O-oh!" groaned the Moon Man. "You want to kill me, I know! Well, kill me, then! I deserve it, it is all my own fault, for I wanted

to carry you off from the earth. But before I die, cover me with skins and let me get warm, I am so chilled...."

The girl was much surprised.

"You — chilled?" she said. "You who are homeless, who have no *choom*? Why, you belong in the open. What need have you of my skins!"

Then the Moon Man began to plead with the girl, and this is what he said:

"Since I am homeless, as you say, and doomed to be so for ever, let me go free to roam the sky. I will be something for your people to watch, something to give them pleasure. Let me go free, and I will serve as a beacon for your people and guide them across the tundra. Let me go free, and I will turn night into day! Let me go free, and I will measure the year for your people. First I will be the Moon of the Old Bull, then the Moon of the Birth of the Calves, then the Moon of the Waters, then the Moon of the Leaves, then the Moon of Warmth, then the Moon of the Shedding of Antlers, then the Moon of Love Among the Wild Deer, then the Moon of the First Winter, and then the Moon of the Shortening Days."

"And if I let you go free and you become strong again and your hands and feet grow strong — will you not come down from the sky to carry me off with you?" the girl asked.

"Oh, no, never!" the Moon Man cried. "I shall try to forget the very road to you. You are far too clever. I shall never come down from the sky again. Only let me go free, and I will light up sky and earth!"

So the girl let the Moon Man go free, and he rose up into the sky and flooded the earth with light.

Kotura, Lord of the Winds

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A Nenets Fairy Tale



In a nomad camp there once lived an old man with his three daughters, the youngest of whom was the kindest and cleverest of the three.

The old man was very poor. His *choom*, his tent of skins, was worn and full of holes and there was little warm clothing to wear. When the frost was very fierce the old man would huddle by the fire with his three daughters and try to keep warm. At night, before going to bed, they would put out the fire, and then they would shiver from the cold until morning.

Once, in the middle of winter, a terrible snowstorm came down on the tundra. The wind blew for a day, it blew for a second day, and it blew for a third day, and it seemed as if all the *chooms* would be blown quite away. The people dared not show their noses outside and sat in the *chooms*, hungry and cold.

So, too, the old man and his three daughters. They sat in the *choom* and listened to the storm raging, and the old man said:

"We'll never be able to sit out this blizzard. It was sent by Kotura, Lord of the Winds. He sounds angry and must be waiting for us to send him a good wife. You, my eldest daughter, must go to Kotura or else our whole people will perish. You must go and beg him to stop the blizzard."

"How can I go to him?" the girl asked. "I don't know the way."

"I will give you a little sledge. Place it so that it faces the wind, give it a push and follow it. The wind will untie the strings of your

coat, but you must not stop to tie them. The snow will get into your shoes, but you must not stop to shake it out. Never pause till you reach a tall mountain. Climb it, and when you get to the top, then only can you stop to shake out the snow from your shoes and tie the strings of your coat. By and by a little bird will fly up to you and perch on your shoulder. Do not chase it away, be kind to it and fondle it gently. Then get into your sledge and coast down the mountain. The sledge will bring you straight to the door of Kotura's *choom*. Enter the *choom*, but touch nothing, just sit there and wait. When Kotura comes, do as he tells you to."

Eldest Daughter put on her furs, placed the sledge her father gave her so that it faced the wind, and with a push sent it gliding along.

She walked after it a little way, and the strings of her coat came undone, the snow got into her shoes and she was very, very cold. She did not do as her father bade her do, but stopped and began to tie the strings of her coat and to shake the snow out of her shoes. After that she moved on, in the face of the wind. She walked a long time till at last she saw a tall mountain. No sooner had she climbed it than a little bird flew up to her and was about to perch on her shoulder. But Eldest Daughter waved her hands to chase it off, and the bird circled over her for a little while and then flew away. Eldest Daughter got into her sledge and coasted down the mountainside, and the sledge stopped by a large *choom*.

The girl came inside, and looked about her, and the first thing she saw was a large piece of roasted venison. She made up a fire, warmed herself and began to tear pieces of fat off the meat. She would tear off a piece and eat it, and then tear off another and eat it too, and she had eaten her fill when all of a sudden she heard someone coming up to the *choom*. The skin that hung over the entrance was lifted, and a young giant entered. This was Kotura himself. He looked at Eldest Daughter and said:

"Where do you come from, woman, and what do you want here?"

"My father sent me to you," answered Eldest Daughter.

"Why did he send you?"

"So that you would take me to wife."

"I was out hunting and I have brought back some meat. Stand up now and cook it for me," Kotura said.

Eldest Daughter did as she was told, and when the meat was ready, Kotura told her to take it out of the pot and divide it in two parts.

"You and I will eat one half of the meat," he said. "And you will put the other half in a wooden dish and take it to the neighbouring *choom*. Do not go into the *choom* yourself but wait at the entrance. An old woman will come out to you. Give her the meat and wait till she brings back the empty dish."

Eldest Daughter took the meat and went outside. The wind was howling, and the snow falling, and it was quite dark. How could one find anything in such a storm!... Eldest Daughter walked off a little way, stopped, thought a while and then threw the meat in the snow. After that she came back to Kotura with the empty dish.

Kotura glanced at her and said:

"Have you given the meat to our neighbours?"

"Yes, I have," Eldest Daughter replied.

"Show me the dish, I want to see what they gave you in return for the meat," Kotura said.

Eldest Daughter showed him the empty dish, but Kotura said nothing. He ate his share of the meat and went to bed.

In the morning he rose, brought some untanned deer skins into the *choom* and said:

"While I am out hunting, dress these skins and make me a new coat out of them, new shoes and new mittens. I will put them on when I come back and see if you are clever with your hands or not."

And with these words, Kotura went off to hunt in the tundra, and Eldest Daughter set to work. Suddenly the hanging of skin over the entrance lifted, and a grey-haired old woman came in.

"Something has got into my eye, child," said she. "See if you can take it out."

"I have no time to bother with you," answered Eldest Daughter. "I am busy."

The old woman said nothing but turned away and went out of the

choom. Eldest Daughter was left alone. She dressed the skins hastily and began cutting them with a knife, hurrying to get her work done by evening. Indeed, in such a hurry was she that she did not try to make the clothes nicely, but only to get them finished as quickly as possible. She had no needle to sew with, and only one day to do the work in, and it was all she could do to get anything done at all.

In the evening Kotura came back from his hunting.

"Are my new clothes ready?" he asked her.

"They are," Eldest Daughter replied.

Kotura took the clothes, he ran his hands over them, and the skins felt rough to his touch, so badly were they dressed. He looked, and he saw that the garments were poorly cut, sewn together carelessly and much too small for him.

At this he became very angry and threw Eldest Daughter out of the *choom*. He threw her far, far out, and she fell into a drift of snow and lay there till she froze to death.

And the howling of the wind became fiercer than ever.

The old man sat in his *choom*, he listened to the wind howling and the storm raging day in and day out, and said:

"Eldest Daughter did not heed my words, she did not do as I bade her. That is why the wind does not stop howling. Kotura is angry. You must go to him, Second Daughter."

The old man made a little sledge, he told Second Daughter just what he had told Eldest Daughter, and he sent her off to Kotura. And himself he remained in the *choom* with his youngest daughter and waited for the blizzard to stop.

Second Daughter placed the sledge so that it faced the wind, and, giving it a push, went along after it. The strings of her coat came undone as she walked and the snow got into her shoes. She was very cold, and, forgetting her father's behest, shook the snow out of her shoes and tied the strings of her coat sooner than he had told her to.

She came to the mountain and climbed it, and, seeing the little bird, waved her hands and chased it away. Then she got into her sledge and coasted down the mountainside straight up to Kotura's *choom*.

She entered the *choom*, made up a fire, had her fill of venison and sat down to wait for Kotura.

Kotura came back from his hunting, he saw Second Daughter and asked her:

"Why have you come to me?"

"My father sent me," replied Second Daughter.

"Why did he send you?"

"So that you would take me to wife."

"Why do you sit there then? I am hungry, be quick and cook me some meat."

When the meat was ready, Kotura ordered Second Daughter to take it out of the pot and cut it in two parts.

"You and I will eat one half of the meat," Kotura said. "As for the other, put it in that wooden dish yonder and take it to the neighbouring *choom*. Do not enter the *choom* yourself but stand near it and wait for your dish to be brought out to you."

Second Daughter took the meat and went outside. The wind was howling and the snow whirling and it was hard to make out anything. So, not liking to go any farther, she threw the meat in the snow, stood there a while and then went back to Kotura.

"Have you given them the meat?" Kotura asked.

"Yes, I have," Second Daughter replied.

"You have come back very soon. Show me the dish, I want to see what they gave you in return for the meat."

Second Daughter did as she was told, and Kotura glanced at the empty dish but said not a word and went to bed. In the morning he brought in some untanned deer skins and told Second Daughter, just as he had her sister, to make him some new clothes by evening.

"Set to work," he said. "In the evening I will see how well you can sew."

With these words Kotura went off to hunt, and Second Daughter set to work. She was in a great hurry, for somehow she had to get everything done by evening. Suddenly a grey-haired old woman came into the *choom*.

"A mote has got into my eye, child," she said. "Take it out for me, please. I cannot do it myself."

"I am too busy to bother with your old mote!" Second Daughter replied. "Go away and let me work."

And the old woman made no reply and went away without another word.

Night fell, and Kotura came back from his hunting.

"Are my new clothes ready?" he asked.

"Yes, they are," Second Daughter replied.

"Let me try them on, then."

Kotura put on the clothes, and he saw that they were badly cut and much too small and that the seams ran all askew. Kotura flew into a rage, he threw Second Daughter where he had thrown her sister, and she too froze to death.

Meanwhile the old man sat in his *choom* with his youngest daughter and waited in vain for the storm to calm down. The wind was fiercer than ever, and it seemed as if the *choom* would be blown away any minute.

"My daughters did not heed my words," the old man said. "They have made things worse, they have angered Kotura. You are my last remaining daughter, but still I must send you to Kotura in the hope that he will take you to wife. If I don't, our whole people will perish from hunger. So get ready, daughter, and go."

And he told her where to go and what to do.

Youngest Daughter came out of the *choom*, she placed the sledge so that it faced the wind and, with a push, sent it gliding along. The wind was howling and roaring, trying to throw Youngest Daughter off her feet, and the snow blinded her eyes so that she could see nothing.

But Youngest Daughter plodded on through the blizzard, never forgetting a word of her father's behest and doing just as he had bade her do. The strings of her coat came undone, but she did not stop to tie them. The snow got into her shoes, but she did not stop to shake it out. It was very cold, and the wind was very strong, but she did not pause and went on and on. It was only when she came to the mountain and climbed it that she stopped and began shaking the snow out of her shoes and tying the strings of her coat. Then a little bird flew up to her and perched on her shoulder. But Youngest Daughter did not chase the bird away. Instead, she

fondled and stroked it tenderly. When the bird flew away Youngest Daughter got into her sledge and coasted down the mountainside straight up to Kotura's *choom*.

She came into the *choom* and waited. Suddenly the hanging of skins over the entrance was lifted and the young giant came in. When he saw Youngest Daughter he laughed and said:

"Why have you come to me?"

"My father sent me," answered Youngest Daughter.

"Why did he send you?"

"To beg you to stop the storm, for if you don't, all our people will perish."

"Why do you sit there? Why don't you make up a fire and cook some meat?" Kotura said. "I am hungry, and so must you be too, for I see you have eaten nothing since you came."

Youngest Daughter cooked the meat quickly, took it out of the pot and gave it to Kotura, and Kotura ate some of it and then told her to take one half of the meat to the neighbouring *choom*.

Youngest Daughter took the dish of meat and went outside. The wind was roaring loudly and the snow whirling and spinning. Where was she to go? Where was the *choom* of the neighbours to be found? She stood there a while, thinking, and then she started out through the storm, not knowing herself where she was going.

Suddenly there appeared before her the very same little bird that had flown up to her on the mountain. Now it began darting about near her face. Youngest Daughter decided to follow the bird's lead. Whichever way the bird flew, there she went. On and on she walked, and at last, off to one side, a little distance away, she saw what looked like a spark flashing. Youngest Daughter was overjoyed, and she went in that direction, thinking that the *choom* was there. But when she drew near, she found that what she had thought to be a *choom* was a large mound with smoke curling up from it. Youngest Daughter walked round the mound and she prodded it with her foot, and suddenly there, in the side of the mound, she saw a door. It opened before her, and a grey-haired old woman looked out.

"Who are you? Why have you come?" asked she.

"I have brought you some meat, grandmother," Youngest Daughter replied. "Kotura asked me to give it to you."

"Kotura, you say? Very well, then, let me have it. And you wait here, outside."

Youngest Daughter stood by the mound and waited. She waited a long time. At last the door opened again, the old woman looked out and handed her the wooden dish. There was something heaped on it, but the girl could not make out what it was. She took the dish and returned with it to Kotura.

"Why were you away so long?" Kotura asked. "Did you find the *choom*?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you give them the meat?"

"Yes."

"Let me have the dish, I want to see what is in it."

Kotura looked, and he saw that there were several knives in the dish and steel needles and scrapers and brakes for dressing skins.

Kotura laughed aloud and said:

"You have received many fine things that will be very useful to you."

In the morning Kotura rose and he brought some deer skins into the *choom* and ordered Youngest Daughter to make him a new coat, shoes and mittens by evening.

"If you make them well," he said, "I will take you to wife."

Kotura went away, and Youngest Daughter set to work. The old woman proved very useful. Youngest Daughter had everything she needed to make the clothes with. But how much could one do in a single day?... Youngest Daughter spent no time thinking about it but tried to do as much as she could. She dressed the skins and she scraped them, she cut and she sewed. All of a sudden the hanging of skins over the entrance lifted, and a grey-haired old woman came in. Youngest Daughter knew her at once: it was the same old woman to whom she had taken the meat.

"Help me, my child," the old woman said. "There's a mote in my eye. Please take it out for me, I cannot do it myself."

Youngest Daughter did not refuse. She put aside her work and soon had the mote out of the old woman's eye.

"Good," said the old woman, "my eye does not hurt any more. Now look in my right ear."

Youngest Daughter looked in the old woman's ear and started.

"What do you see there?" the old woman asked.

"There is a maid sitting in your ear," Youngest Daughter replied.

"Why don't you call her? She will help you to make Kotura's clothes for him."

Youngest Daughter was overjoyed, and she called to the maid. At her call, not one, but four young maids jumped out of the old woman's ear, and all four set to work. They dressed the skins and they scraped them, they cut and they sewed. The garments were soon ready. After that the old woman hid the four maids in her ear again and went away.

In the evening Kotura returned from his hunting.

"Have you done all that I told you to do?" he asked.

"Yes, I have," Youngest Daughter replied.

"Let me see my new clothes, I will try them on."

Youngest Daughter gave him the clothes, and Kotura took them and passed his hand over them: the skins were soft and pleasant to the touch. He put on the garments, and they were neither too small nor too large, but fitted him well and were made to last. Kotura smiled and said:

"I like you, Youngest Daughter, and my mother and four sisters like you too. You work well and you have courage. You braved a terrible storm in order that your people might not perish. Be my wife, stay with me in my *choom*."

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the storm in the tundra was stilled. No longer did the people try to hide from the wind, no longer did they freeze. One and all, they came out of their *chooms* into the light of day!

